



# STORIES FROM GREEK HISTORY

RETOLD FROM HERODOTUS

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*"The struggle with Persia gave to Athens her right place. Assuming the hegemony of Hellas, to which she was fore-ordained by her spiritual superiority, she flashed in the supreme moment which followed the battle of Salamis into the full consciousness of her own greatness."*—SYMONDS

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## PREFACE

**M**Y object in writing this book is to give a series of historical pictures, drawn from the narrative of Herodotus, and illustrating the central theme of his work—the eternal struggle, and the eternal contrast, between East and West. In the earlier books, where he deals mainly with Oriental history, there is a large element of legend; and the task of disentangling the historical from the mythical portions belongs to the critical historian. For the purpose which I had in view it was sufficient that the characters and incidents were consistent with the main plot of the great international drama. Criticism may discredit many of the details in the stories of Croesus and Cyrus, but no criticism can blind us to the power and charm of the great master who has drawn these immortal pictures, with their profound moral lesson.

The ultimate aim of history, as of all great literature, must be to teach us by high examples what to avoid and what to admire. Without this ethical purpose, stripped of its human interest and significance, historical study is an idle pastime, fit only to amuse the leisure of dreaming pedants.



Political institutions are but the external image and expression of national character : Eastern tyranny, Spartan oligarchy, Athenian democracy, have their root and origin in the characters of individual Athenians, Spartans, and Asiatics ; and the supreme task of the historian is to enable us to trace back the great events of history to their fountain-head in the human heart.

The lesson will come home to us in later years. Our immediate duty is to impress on young minds a vivid image of the great events and great figures of the past ; and with this intention I invite my readers to follow me into the land which the old Greek has revealed to us : a land full of wonder and beauty, full of grandeur and majesty, haunted by the echoes of human laughter and tears ; a land never darkened by critic's frown or blighted by cynic's smile ; where truth and fiction still live in loving union together, and truth borrows grace from fiction, and fiction gathers dignity from truth.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	xi
CRÆSUS, KING OF LYDIA . . . . .	1
CYRUS THE PERSIAN . . . . .	16
THE TREASURY OF RHAMPSINITUS . . . . .	34
CAMBYSES THE MADMAN . . . . .	39
POLYCRATES, TYRANT OF SAMOS . . . . .	52
HOW DARIUS BECAME KING . . . . .	57
OF THE GREEK PHYSICIAN WHO HEALED DARIUS . . . . .	63
THE DEVOTION OF ZOPYRUS . . . . .	71
HOW DARIUS MADE WAR ON SCYTHIA . . . . .	77
CYPSELUS OF CORINTH AND PERIANDER HIS SON . . . . .	90
TALES OF SPARTA—	
I. Introductory . . . . .	100
II. Messenia, Tegea, Thyrea . . . . .	107
III. The Story of Glaucus . . . . .	111
TALES OF ATHENS—	
I. Introductory . . . . .	114
II. The Sons of Alcmaeon . . . . .	118
III. Pisistratus and his Sons . . . . .	121

	PAGE
THE REVOLT OF IONIA . . . . .	132
MARATHON . . . . .	148
THE INVASION OF XERXES—	
I. To the Arrival of Xerxes at Thessalonica . . . . .	157
II. Events in Greece . . . . .	171
III. Thermopylæ . . . . .	177
IV. Artemisium . . . . .	187
V. Salamis . . . . .	193
VI. Platæa . . . . .	210
VII. Mycale . . . . .	228
CONCLUSION . . . . .	231
PRONOUNCING AND EXPLANATORY INDEX . . . . .	233

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. "FLY, FATHER, OR THOU WILT SELL THINE HONOUR"¹ . . . . .	( <i>Victor Prout</i> )	Frontispiece
2. THE DELPHIC SIBYL . . . . .	( <i>Michael Angelo</i> ) . . . . .	PAGE 8
3. "THE HERDSMAN TOOK THE CHILD" . . . . .	( <i>Victor Prout</i> ) . . . . .	16
4. THE PROCESSION OF THE SACRED BULL — "APIS- OSIRIS" . . . . .	( <i>F. A. Bridgman</i> ) . . . . .	44
5. "HE DREW HIS BOW AND SHOT" . . . . .	( <i>Victor Prout</i> ) . . . . .	48
6. GREEK HORSEMEN . . . . .	( <i>Parthenon Frieze</i> ) . . . . .	78
7. "SHE CAUGHT UP THE CHILD AND HID IT IN A CHEST" . . . . .	( <i>Victor Prout</i> ) . . . . .	92
8. ATHENS—THE ACROPOLIS . . . . .	( <i>Photograph</i> ) . . . . .	114
9. GREEK CAVALRY SOLDIER . . . . .	( <i>National Museum, Naples</i> ) . . . . .	124
10. "HE BADE ME TELL THEE TO SHAVE MY HEAD" . . . . .	( <i>Victor Prout</i> ) . . . . .	134
11. THE PLAIN OF MARATHON . . . . .	( <i>Photograph</i> ) . . . . .	150

	PAGE
12 MILTIADES . . . . . ( <i>The Capitol, Rome</i> ) . .	154
13 THEMISTOCLES . . . . . ( <i>Vatican, Rome</i> ) . .	173
14. THE TOMB OF LEONIDAS . . . . . ( <i>Photograph</i> ) . .	186
15 ARISTIDES . . . . . ( <i>Capitol, Rome</i> ) . .	202
16 PERSIAN SOLDIER KILLED AT MARATHON . . . . . ( <i>National Museum, Naples</i> )	224

## INTRODUCTION

WHEN we speak of the history of Greece we mean the history, not so much of a country, as of a people. The Greeks were a race of extraordinary energy and intelligence, who, at a period of which we have no record, penetrated into that part of Europe now called the Balkan Peninsula, and from there gradually spread themselves over the adjacent coasts and islands. They went on founding colony after colony, until at last their cities occupied the whole coast of the Mediterranean, and extended eastward to the farthest limit of the Black Sea, and westward to the Strait of Gibraltar. But, however far they went, they always prided themselves on their name of Greeks, and spoke of all other races as *Barbarians*. They were not a nation of conquerors and lawgivers, like the Romans, nor mere traders, like the Phoenicians. What distinguishes them from all other peoples of the earth is the keenness of their intellect, their insatiable thirst for knowledge, their love of beauty, and their power of embodying it in forms of art and poetry. And this is what still gives an unequalled interest to their history and their literature.

The Greeks were divided into three great tribes—the Ionians, the Achæans (or Æolians), and the Dorians. Of these, the earliest were the Ionians and Achæans. In the poems of Homer we read of a great king, named Agamemnon, who ruled in the city of Mycene, in north-east Peloponnesus (Morea), and led a great army of Greeks against Troy, a city in Asia Minor, near the shores of the Dardanelles. He was accompanied by his brother Menelaus, King of Sparta, and by a great number of lesser chieftains, who all called themselves kings; and after a siege, lasting ten years, Troy was captured, and burnt. Eighty years after the fall of Troy the Dorians, a hardy race of mountaineers, entered Peloponnesus from the north, and established themselves in various positions, the chief of which were Sparta, Corinth, and the island of Ægina. The Achæans of Peloponnesus were now confined to a narrow strip of land, running along the southern coast of the Gulf of Corinth, and now called, after them, Achæa; and the old population of Arcadia, a rugged mountain region forming the core of Peloponnesus, remained undisturbed.

The Spartan Dorians settled in the south-east portion of Peloponnesus, called Laconia, and pitched their camp in a deep valley at the foot of Mount Taygetus, on the banks of the Eurotas. After a desperate struggle, lasting for thirty years, they made themselves masters of the district called Messenia, west of Sparta, and henceforth remained undisputed masters of Southern Pele-

ponnesus. The conquered population remained as subjects, and was divided into two classes : the first and more favoured of these kept possession of their farms, and managed their own affairs, but had to pay tribute to Sparta, and serve in her armies. The second, called *Helots*, were much worse treated ; and the name of *Helot* has passed into common language, denoting the lowest state of social degradation. The Helots were serfs, who tilled the soil for their masters, and accompanied them in battle. They were stout and brave, and, being much more numerous than the Spartans, were a constant source of terror to their tyrants, who employed the most cruel and treacherous methods to keep down their numbers.

The Spartans thus formed a military aristocracy, living in the midst of a hostile population, and closely united by common interests and common perils. Their city was a camp ; their life a never-ending drill. They stood apart from the other Greeks in their contempt for art, literature, and all the refinements and elegancies of life. Their whole training was directed to one object—the maintenance of their position as the ruling race in Peloponnesus. Northward lay Arcadia, peopled by a turbulent and warlike race of mountain shepherds. On the west coast was Elis, which had been occupied at about the time of the Dorian invasion by the Ætolians, another northern tribe ; and in Elis was the famous city of Olympia, where multitudes congregated from all parts of



Greece every four years to take part in the Olympian Games. On the north-east was the peninsula of Argolis, with the powerful city of Argos, proud of its connection with the ancient glories of the Grecian race, and bitterly jealous of Sparta. Thus threatened continually by perils from within and perils from without, the Spartans had enough to do to maintain the high position which they held among Greeks. That they succeeded in doing so for so long was due to the severity, simplicity, and self-denial which have made the name of Sparta a proverb for all time.

Sparta was the acknowledged leader of the Dorian race. Among the Ionians, Athens rose by slow degrees to the highest place. In very early times, before the Dorian invasion, the population of Greece was constantly shifting, and the most fertile districts were most exposed to invasion from neighbouring tribes. But the soil of Attica, being poor and thin, offered little temptation to the invader; consequently Attica from a very early period was occupied by the same inhabitants. The Athenians called themselves children of the soil, and old-fashioned Athenian gentlemen fastened their hair in a knot with a golden grasshopper, to show that they, like the grasshoppers, were an earth-born race. Attica was at first broken up into scattered townships, each governed by its own magistrate. These were united into a single state at the time when Athens was ruled by kings. The kingly power was gradually abolished, and in 683 B.C. the government was

placed in the hands of nine magistrates, who were appointed from year to year. For a long time the little state was torn by faction, the rich and noble striving to keep all the power in their own hands, and the poor struggling against the hardships and miseries which made their lives unbearable. All the land had passed into the hands of a few powerful families, and the poor men who tilled the soil were crushed by debt. The position became so desperate that in 594 B.C. Solon, the wisest man of his time, was called upon to make new laws, and save the state. Solon took measures to relieve the debtors, and drew up a new form of government, with a senate of four hundred to superintend public business, and a sort of parliament, called the Ecclesia, in which every free-born native of Attica had a vote.

These were the beginnings of public liberty in Attica ; but it was long before they bore fruit. In 560 B.C. Pisistratus, a noble, placed himself at the head of the poorer citizens, and made himself Tyrant of Athens. He was expelled, but in 545 B.C. he succeeded in establishing himself firmly on the throne, and reigned in peace till his death in 527 B.C. He was succeeded by his son Hippias, who ruled until 510 B.C., when he was driven out with the help of the Spartans. After the expulsion of Hippias the work of Solon was carried out by Clisthenes. The famous Athenian Democracy begins from this date (509 B.C.) ; and henceforth Athens sprang rapidly into power and fame, and became the great rival of Sparta.

The constant shifting of the population in the Greek peninsula, and its unsettled condition in early times, led to the foundation of numerous colonies, which extended, as we have seen, along the whole coast of the Mediterranean, and to the eastern shores of the Black Sea. Those which chiefly concern us in the period of Greek history dealt with in this book are the Achæan (or Æolic), the Dorian, and Ionian colonies on the coasts of Asia Minor immediately facing Greece. Of these, the most important are the Ionian colonies, with the powerful cities of Ephesus and Miletus, founded by Athens. In 550 B.C. the Ionian cities of Asia Minor were conquered by Croesus, King of Lydia, the westernmost of those great Oriental monarchies with which the Greeks were destined not long after to fight for their very existence. Croesus in his turn fell before a mightier power, which in the meantime had been growing up in the heart of Asia. That power was Persia, and in order to understand the events which follow we must turn our thoughts for a moment to the heart of Asia.

In 559 B.C. Astyages, the last King of Media, was defeated by Cyrus, the young King of Persia, and with this date begins the greatness of the Persian empire. In 546 Cyrus captured Sardis, the capital of Lydia, and Croesus henceforth lived as a guest in the Persian court. The conquest of Lydia brought the Greeks in the coast-towns of Asia Minor into contact with the Persians; and all these cities were conquered by Harpagus, a general of Cyrus. After the death of Cyrus in

529 B.C., Cambyses, his son, conquered Egypt (525 B.C.), and died four years afterwards, 521 B.C. After a short interval, during which the Persian throne was occupied by a usurper, named Smerdis, Darius, son of Hystaspes, became king, and reigned for thirty-six years.

In 499 B.C. the Ionians of Asia Minor revolted from Persia, and, aided by the Athenians, burnt Sardis. The revolt spread to all the Greek cities of Asia Minor, and lasted six years before it was finally suppressed. In 492 B.C. Darius, who had not forgotten the part taken by the Athenians in the burning of Sardis, sent a fleet and army under Mardonius against Athens. The fleet was totally destroyed by a storm off Mount Athos, and the army was attacked and routed by the wild Thracian tribes.

In 490 B.C. a second fleet and army under Datis and Artaphernes sailed across the Ægean, burnt Eretria, on the coast of Eubœa, opposite to Attica, and then came to land at Marathon, on the northern coast of Attica. Here the Persians, numbering one hundred thousand, were totally defeated by the Athenians and Platæans, whose whole force only amounted to ten thousand men. Darius at once set about making preparations for a third expedition, which was to be on such a scale that all resistance would be hopeless. In the midst of this task he was overtaken by death (485 B.C.), and was succeeded by his son Xerxes, who, much against his will, was persuaded to carry out his father's designs against Greece.

The issue of this wild and impious attempt on the liberty of a young and gallant people is fully described in the latter part of this book. The Greeks were fighting for all that makes life worth living: for their hearths and homes, their religion, their manhood, their high traditions. The Persians were fighting for a master who was himself a slave—the slave of low passions and childish vanity. Therefore, in spite of overwhelming numbers, in spite of faint hearts and cold counsels, the cause of Greece, the cause of European civilisation, won the day.

# STORIES FROM GREEK HISTORY

## Cræsus King of Lydia

**T**HROUGH the fair plains of Lydia flows the golden stream of the Pactolus. And concerning this river a wondrous tale is told. Midas, King of Phrygia, had pleased the mighty god Bacchus, and the god, in gratitude, bade him ask a gift. Then Midas uttered this foolish prayer: "Grant, great Bacchus, that whatever I touch may turn to gold." Bacchus was grieved at his folly; but, bound by his promise, and wishing Midas to learn a lesson, he granted his desire. So Midas, to prove the god, picked up a stone, and lo! the stone was solid gold. Then he took off his sandals, and trod the ground with his bare feet, and wherever he stepped he left a footprint of pure gold. And so he went on, wild with joy, turning everything within his reach to gold. But his joy was short-lived. Soon he grew hungry, and sat down to meat, but the first morsel which touched his lips stiffened into gold. He was thirsty, and raised the cup to his lips; in a moment his mouth was filled with golden mud. Then all at once the magnitude of the curse which he had brought upon

## 2      Stories from Greek History

himself came home to him. Master of boundless wealth, he was poorer than the poorest slave in his house. He was starving in the midst of millions! In dire distress, he turned again to the god, and begged him to take back his gift. And Bacchus had pity, and answered: "Poor fool! thou wouldst be rich, and now thou art poor indeed. But if thou hast learnt thy lesson I will plague thee no more; after short penance the curse shall be removed. Hear now my command: go thou to the Pactolus, and enter the stream, and wade breast-deep in the water up to the river's source; there plunge thy head in the spouting waters as they gush upward from their fount, and wash clean thy body, and wash away thy guilt." The wondering Midas faltered his thanks, and did as he was bade. And as he staggered upward, stemming the rushing stream, the golden gift passed from his body into the waters; and from that hour the Pactolus brought wealth on his flood, and all his sands were gold.

On his banks rose the great city of Sardis, where the kings of Lydia built their palace, and held their court. The most famous of these was Croesus, whose story we are to hear. He was the richest man of his time, and his name is still a proverb for boundless wealth. Not content with his own great kingdom, he conquered the Greeks who had built cities on his coast; but having conquered them he ruled them, not as a tyrant, but as a father and lord. Thus Sardis grew famous and mighty, and the name of Croesus

## Cræsus King of Lydia 3

spread far and wide, and wise men came from distant lands to see him, and wonder at his state. Wisest of all these was Solon of Athens, who had made good laws for the men of his city, and saved them from misery and ruin. But, fearing that if he remained in Athens he would be compelled to change some of his laws, he went away for ten years, first binding the Athenians by a solemn oath not to change anything until his return. During these ten years he visited many strange countries, and while still on his travels he came to Lydia. Cræsus, who had heard of his wisdom and his renown, welcomed him, and feasted him in the palace, and showed him all the glory and wealth of Sardis. One evening, as they were sitting together after a gorgeous banquet, Cræsus turned to Solon, and said: "My friend, we have heard much of thy wisdom and thy travels—how that thou roamest over the whole earth in search of knowledge—now, therefore, we would fain ask thee a question: 'Who is he whom thou callest the happiest of men?'" So Cræsus inquired of Solon, tempting him, and expecting him to answer: "Cræsus the Lydian." But Solon was no flatterer, so he answered, in all honesty: "Tellus the Athenian." Cræsus, who had never heard of Tellus, asked who he was, and why Solon called him the happiest of men. And Solon replied: "Tellus lived at Athens in the days of her prosperity, and lived to see his children's children happy and thriving; and being rich, as we in Athens count riches, he died a noble death:



## 4 Stories from Greek History

for he routed the foes of his native city in battle, and died in the hour of victory ; and the Athenians buried him at the public cost, and remember his name with honour and love." Then for some minutes there was silence, while Croesus pondered on the words of Solon. But, thinking that he would win at least the second place, he asked who was second in happiness to Tellus. Solon answered : " Cleobis and Biton of Argos. They had enough of this world's goods, and were mighty athletes. Their home was in the country, eight miles from the city, where stands the temple of the great goddess Hera. Now it happened, when the yearly festival of Hera came round, and their mother wished to visit the temple, that the oxen who should have drawn her carriage were working in the fields some way from the house. There was no time to fetch the oxen, so these strong and pious youths themselves put on the yoke, and drew their mother in the heavy car all those eight weary miles to the town. Great was the wonder of the multitude thronging the streets as the strange procession passed by—the gallant lads straining at the yoke, and the car with its precious burden creaking and rumbling behind. The mother's eyes were moist with happy tears as she heard the shouts of the great host of worshippers, who stood wondering at the manly beauty of her sons, while the women cried out blessings on their stout and loving hearts. Then she alighted, and went up into the temple to pray. And she fell on her knees in the awful presence of

the goddess, and cried : ' Grant, O goddess, to my sons, who have honoured me thus, that gift which is the best of all gifts for man.' Her prayer was answered ; for when the young men had offered sacrifice and taken their share in the feast they lay down in the temple to sleep, and in the morning they were found in the same place, sleeping the long and quiet sleep of death." Then Cræsus was wroth, and spake : " Art thou then blind, Solon, that, after thine eyes have looked on all my glory and my state, thou holdest me of less account than these men of naught, these common drudges of Athens and Argos ? " Solon replied : " Cræsus, thou hast asked me concerning the lot of man. Now I know that the gods are full of envy, and look on human happiness with grudging eyes. The days of the years of our life are three-score years and ten, or, if a man be very strong, perhaps fourscore. And in all the many thousand days of those seventy or eighty years how many fickle chances, how many envious blows of Fate, have we not to face ! Think not that all the glitter of thy gold, nor all thy pomp and power, can save thee from Fortune's wanton whim. Too often the sunny day of happiness ends in the black night of misery and disaster. Therefore I say that we may call no man happy until he is dead." But Solon's words seemed to Cræsus as the words of folly, and he dismissed the sage in anger and contempt.

But soon the words of Solon bore fruit, and the pride of Cræsus received a bitter blow. He had

## 6 Stories from Greek History

two sons, one of whom, being dumb, was a shame and sorrow to his father, but the other, whose name was Atys, was a fair and goodly youth. Not long after Solon's departure Croesus had a dream, in which a voice warned him that he was destined to lose this darling son by an iron point. Full of alarm, he caused all weapons of iron—swords and spears and arrows—to be hidden away. And he brought home a young wife for his son, and kept him always near his own person, not suffering him to go out to fight or hunt any more. While he was still busy with the preparations for his son's marriage there came to Sardis a man, a fugitive from Phrygia, one of the royal house, Adrastus by name. He had slain a Phrygian, his own brother, and was flying from the avenger. Croesus gave him shelter, and purified him of his guilt by certain ceremonies used in that time and country. He was welcomed as a prince, and given a lodging in the palace. Just at this time there came messengers from Mysia, a province in the kingdom of Croesus, and, standing before the king, they said: "O king, we are undone! A monstrous boar has come down from the mountains, and ravages our crops and slays our men. Now, therefore, we pray thee to send thy strong men, and thy good hounds, and the young man thy son, that we may overcome the beast, and save our land." Croesus answered: "My son I may not send, for he is newly wed, and abides by his young wife. Nevertheless, be comforted, for I will not see my people perish. I will send my

strong men and my good hounds, and will lay my charge upon them to help you all they can." When Atys heard this he was grieved, and besought his father saying : " Father, dost thou count me a coward and a weakling that thou keepest me shut up in thy palace, cut off from all honourable deeds ? With what eyes can I look on the princes of Lydia, or what manner of man shall I seem to my fair young wife, doomed as I am by thee to a life of dishonour and sloth ? Nay, I beseech thee, my father, let me go forth to this great hunting." Croesus made answer : " Son, I count thee neither coward nor weakling, but I have dreamed that I should lose thee by a point of iron. Therefore I keep thee by me always, and for this cause have I given thee a wife. For I count thee as my only son, and would fain keep thee for my comfort while I live." " I thank thee, father," said Atys, " for thy care ; but methinks thou hast mistaken the meaning of this dream. How can a boar, that has neither hands nor iron weapons, slay me with a point of iron ? 'Tis plain that the danger lies elsewhere." Then Croesus was persuaded, and let him go. But before they went forth to slay the boar he sent for the Phrygian Adrastus, and gave him this solemn charge : " Adrastus, I have saved thee from the avenger, and now I uphold thee in honour in my house. Now, therefore, if thou wouldst requite good deeds with good, I pray thee have a care of my son, and shield him from all hurt. Go thou with him to **this** hunting, and get thee honour by thy strong

## 8 Stories from Greek History

right arm, and bring back my son Atys safe and sound." And the sad exile, who sought no honour for himself, but rather shunned the company of his peers, brooding on his private sorrows, promised, for Crœsus' sake, to go with the hunters, and guard the young lad. So they set forth, that gallant band, with horse and hound and picked hunters, to kill the boar. And when they came to the beast's lair forth rushed the boar with bristling neck and champing tusks, and charged down upon the troop. And they stood around, and hurled their hunting spears. Then that same Phrygian exile whom Crœsus had purified from guilt, and saved from the avenger, flung his spear at the boar, missed his mark, but struck Atys, and slew him. And straightway there ran one with speed back to Sardis, to bear the tidings to the king. And Crœsus, when he heard it, wrung his hands, and cried aloud, with an exceeding great and bitter cry, cursing the board at which he had welcomed the exile, and cursing the altar at which he had cleansed him. And he made haste, and went to the city gates; and there he met the woeful procession. In front came they who bare the bier, and behind them came Adrastus, moaning, and wringing his hands. And when he saw Crœsus he wailed aloud, and flung himself at the king's feet, and implored that he might be slain. But the noble heart of Crœsus was moved by this anguish greater than his own, and he took Adrastus by the hand, and sought to comfort him. "Not thine the guilt," he said: "thou wast but





the instrument which the gods had prepared to deal me a deeper and more deadly stroke." So Atys was buried, in sorrowful pomp. And this Adrastus—the slayer of his brother, the slayer of his benefactor's son—when all was over, and the crowd had left the tomb, after one awful curse on himself and his hideous fate, slew himself upon his victim's grave.

Two years Croesus mourned for his son. Then matters of greater import, and the peril threatening from the East, turned his thoughts from private grief to public care. For meanwhile great things had been happening in Asia. The Persians, under Cyrus, had risen against their masters, the Medes, and overthrown their empire, and now ruled over all those vast regions which the Medes in their day had wrested from the Assyrians. As he watched the growth of this new power Croesus began to tremble for his own kingdom, and thought it was wise to check the tide of invasion before it overflowed his own borders. But, wishing first to learn the will of Heaven, he sent messengers to consult the oracle of Delphi. There were many oracles in the ancient world, but the most famous of all was that of the Delphian Apollo. At the foot of Mount Parnassus, in central Greece, there is a deep cavern, and in the midst of the cavern there is a rent in the rock running down deep into the recesses of the earth. Here sat the Sibyl, or priestess, and listened to the divine voice which was borne upward from the mysterious underworld. Sitting thus on her



## 10 Stories from Greek History

sacred seat, called a tripod, and breathing the heady vapours which poured out of the chasm, she became filled with a sort of frenzy, and uttered words of dark and awful import. These were written down by the priest, generally in verse, and handed to those who came to learn the will of the god. Before the cavern was a splendid temple to the Delphian Apollo, rich with the costly offerings of the many great and mighty men who had used the oracle.

Cræsus resolved, before he consulted the Delphic god, to prove him, and learn whether he really knew the future or not. Accordingly, he charged the messengers to go to the oracle on the twentieth day after leaving Sardis, and ask what Cræsus was doing at that precise moment of time. And this was the answer of the god :

“I know the tale of the sands, and all the depths of  
the sea ;

I open the ears of the deaf, and the dumb have a  
voice for me :

I savour the boiling meat of a tortoise of horny hide,  
Seething with flesh of lambs in a brazen cauldron  
wide.”

When Cræsus heard this answer he knew that the Delphic god was a god of truth ; for at the very moment when the oracle had spoken he had actually been boiling in a brazen pot the flesh of a lamb and a tortoise, which he had slaughtered and prepared in a secret place with his own hand. Thus satisfied<sup>\*</sup> that Apollo was no pretender, he sent many costly offerings to Delphi, and asked if

the god advised him to march against the Persians. Then came the answer: "*If Cræsus crosses the Halys a mighty kingdom shall fall.*" Great was the joy of Cræsus; for he did not see that the oracle was of the two-edged kind, which cuts both ways; and he thought that the "mighty kingdom" mentioned was that of Persia. So he made ready his army, and marched against Cyrus. He crossed the Halys, which was then the boundary between the Lydian and Persian dominions, and met the army of Cyrus in the country called Cappadocia. Here a fierce battle was fought, in which neither side gained the mastery. Next day Cræsus, seeing that the Persians made no movement against him, and thinking that his forces were too small to strike a decisive blow, marched back to Sardis, and disbanded his army, intending to assemble a great force, and renew the struggle next year. Then a strange thing occurred: all the pastures about Sardis where the horses fed were filled with serpents; and the horses left eating the grass, and began to devour the serpents. The wise men whom Cræsus consulted interpreted the event thus: "The serpent," they said, "is a child of the soil, the horse a foreigner and a foe, and the devouring of the serpents by the horses is a sign that a foreign host is coming to destroy the native children of Lydia."

Cyrus was not the man to neglect such an opportunity. When he learnt that Cræsus had sent away his army he marched straight into Lydia, and encamped under the walls of Sardis. Cræsus,

## 12 Stories from Greek History

thus driven to extremity, led out such forces as he had left, and gave battle in the plain before the city. Now, the Lydians were famous horsemen, and though in after days they became soft and cowardly, at this time there were no braver or stouter warriors than they. But a cunning Mede had advised Cyrus how he might make the cavalry of Croesus useless. There were many camels following the Persian army, laden with stores and provisions. Cyrus caused their burdens to be removed, and mounted on each camel a Persian soldier, armed as a horseman. Thus equipped, the camels were drawn up in the van of the Persian army; behind them followed the infantry, and after them the cavalry. Now, the sight and smell of a camel is odious to a horse, and when the horses in the Lydian army saw the camels, and scented them as they came on with the wind, they grew restive, shied, and, soon breaking away from all control, threw the Lydian army into confusion. Still, the Lydians did not give way, but, dismounting from their horses, fought where they stood, and slew many of the Persians. At last the Persians gained the upper hand; the Lydians fled with Croesus into their citadel, and Cyrus laid siege to the place. Forty days the siege lasted, and then Cyrus, growing weary, offered great rewards to the man who should be first to mount the wall.

There was one steep and perilous path, leading up the most precipitous part of the cliff, and one day a Persian soldier saw one of the Lydian garrison descending by this way to pick up his

helmet, which had dropped from the wall. Having marked the way, he scaled the cliff, with several of his comrades ; for the Persians were home-bred mountaineers. The garrison was surprised ; the Persians poured in, cut the defenders to pieces, and sacked the citadel.

Cyrus had given strict orders to spare the life of Cræsus, and bring him safe into his presence. And it so happened that the same son of Cræsus who had caused his father so much sorrow by his dumbness was now the means of saving him from a violent death. Cræsus had tried all means to cure him of his infirmity, and inquiring once at Delphi on his behalf had received this answer :

“Son of Lydia, mighty Cræsus, small of wit, though  
great in power,  
Since thy happy days are numbered, hasten not  
the woeful hour :  
When the voice for which thou longest rings within  
thy palace hall,  
In that self-same hour thy kingdom bows and  
totters to her fall.”

The moment for the fulfilment of the oracle had now arrived. For a Persian soldier, not knowing Cræsus, was rushing on him to slay him, and Cræsus, overwhelmed by his misfortunes, prepared sullenly to receive the stroke. The horror of that sight loosened the boy's tongue, and he cried : “Fellow, slay not Cræsus !” Thus in the hour of his father's disaster speech was given to the son, and he retained the gift till the end of his life.

## 14 Stories from Greek History

Perhaps the Persian had made a vow to sacrifice Cræsus ; perhaps he wished to make trial of the gods whether they would save him who had worshipped and honoured them so long. He had commanded a great pile of wood to be raised, and Cræsus was set bound on the top, with twice seven of the sons of Lydia. Suddenly, as Cræsus stood, bound with chains and waiting for the fire, the words of Solon, long forgotten, came back to his memory : “ Call no man happy till he is dead.” Roused from his stupor, he lifted up his head, and cried thrice, in a loud and lamentable voice : “ Solon ! Solon ! Solon ! ” Cyrus commanded his interpreters to ask who Solon was, and why Cræsus called thus on his name. At first Cræsus would not answer, but being pressed, he said : “ I would that all the tyrants might hear the words of that same Solon.” Questioned further, at last he told all the tale, conveying that solemn warning to all who build their hopes on outward pomp and state. And the stern heart of the conqueror was touched, and something of fear crept in besides when he thought that he too was mortal, and that this Cræsus, whom he had doomed to a cruel death, was not long ago as great as himself. In this altered mood he gave orders to quench the fire, which was now burning fiercely. But when they tried, they could not master the flames. When Cræsus saw them vainly trying to quench the burning pile he understood that Cyrus had repented. Then desire of life came back strongly upon him, and he lifted up his voice, and called to

## Cræsus King of Lydia 15

Apollo, beseeching the god to remember his services, and come to his aid. And suddenly the sky was overcast, the sun was hidden in black clouds, a violent storm of rain descended, and the flames were quenched.

Thus Cræsus was saved, and Cyrus set him on a throne next to himself, and ever after held him in high esteem. Cræsus outlived his conqueror, and remained an honoured guest in the court of Persia until his end.

## Cyrus the Persian

**A**T the time when our story begins the Medes were still masters of the wide dominions which they had conquered from the Assyrians. The last King of the Medes was Astyages, and he had a daughter named Mandane. Being warned in a dream that this Mandane would bear a son who would fill all Asia with alarm, he sought to prevent the fulfilment of the dream, and gave her a husband of the despised race of Persia, which was then subject to the Medes. The name of this man was Cambyses, and he was chosen by Astyages to wed his daughter because he was a man of quiet and peaceful character. Then Astyages had another dream, in which it seemed to him that Mandane gave birth to a vine; and the vine grew, and waxed exceeding great, so that it overshadowed the whole land of Asia. This dream the king told to the wise men of his court, and they declared that the son of Mandane was destined to rule in his stead. Astyages was affrighted, and said to himself: "The babe that is to be born must die." So when the child was born, and named Cyrus, he called Harpagus, the most trusty of his servants, and said "Harpagus, the charge which I lay upon thee, by no



"The Herdsman took the Child"





means neglect it, lest evil befall thyself. Take the child which my daughter Mandane bare, and carry it to thy house, and slay it, and afterwards bury it in the manner that seemeth good to thee." Harpagus answered : " O king, as I have ever done thy bidding, so will I do it now." Forthwith the child was given to Harpagus, clothed as for its grave, and he took it in his arms, and went weeping to his house. There he showed the babe to his wife, and told her the command of Astyages. She asked him what he meant to do, and he answered that he would in no wise stain his hands with that innocent blood. But not daring wholly to disobey Astyages he sent for one of the royal herdsmen, named Mithradates, who tended the king's herds in the wildest part of the mountains. And when the man was come Harpagus said to him : " The king commands thee to take this child, and lay it in the wildest part of the mountains to die. If thou obey not thou shalt die thyself by a terrible death. And I have charge to see that the deed is done." Then the herdsman took the child, and went to his cottage among the lonely hills. Now, it happened that the wife of Mithradates was expecting a child, and when the message came from Harpagus husband and wife feared each for the other—she being anxious because of the unwonted summons, he dreading the danger which lay before his wife. And while he was away his child was born ; and it was born dead. As soon as he entered, the woman assailed him with eager questions, and he answered, with a groan : " Wife,

## 18 Stories from Greek History

would that I had never lived to see this day ! When I drew near to the house of Harpagus I heard the sound of weeping and wailing. Full of fear, I entered, and as soon as I came in I saw a little child, struggling and crying where it lay, arrayed in gold and costly raiment. When Harpagus saw me he bade me take the child, and carry it to the mountains to perish, saying that if I did not this thing I should surely die—for it is the king's command. I took the babe, thinking it to be the child of some bondsman. But when I saw it arrayed in gold and rich attire, and heard the voice of wailing in the house of Harpagus, I wondered. Then the man who brought me forth from the city, and gave the child into my hands, told me all the truth. Behold the son of Mandane, daughter of Astyages, and Cambyses, son of Cyrus ! ”

As he said this Mithradates uncovered the child, and showed it to his wife. But she when she saw the sweet babe, so comely and well-grown, wept aloud, and, falling on her knees, besought her husband to spare its life. He answered that he dare not, for Harpagus would send men to watch, and if he obeyed not he must surely die. His wife, seeing that she prevailed not by entreaty, tried the way of cunning, and said : “ If it must needs be that a child should be left on the mountains then do thou thus :—take my dead son, and lay him on the mountains, and we will keep this child for our own. So shall this child live, and thou shalt be safe, and my son shall be buried as

a prince." Her words pleased Mithradates, and he did as she had said. He gave her the living child, and carried the body of his own son, clothed in purple and gold, to a lonely spot among the mountains. And on the third day he went to Harpagus, and told him that the child was dead. Harpagus sent his servants to see if the man had spoken truth, and when the body was brought he gave it princely burial.

Rescued in this manner from an untimely grave, Cyrus grew up under another name, as the son of Mithradates, and Cyno his wife. When he was ten years old an accident revealed his royal birth. He was playing one day in the road with the other herdsmen's children, and his comrades chose him to be their king. So Cyrus made one of them his architect to build him houses, others his bodyguard, another his courier, another to be "The King's Eye," and spy out all the plots of traitors. Among the herdsmen's sons was a boy of noble birth, the son of Artembares, a Mede. He was playing among the other boys, and when Cyrus laid his commands upon him he would not obey. Then Cyrus commanded the other boys to seize him, and gave him a sound beating. The boy ran home, and showed his stripes to his father, and told him how he had been handled by the "herdsman's son." Artembares went in a rage to the king, and cried: "O king, we are foully entreated by thy slave, a herdsman's son"—uncovering the boy's shoulders as he spoke, and showing the stripes. Wishing to punish such presumption, Astyages

## 20 Stories from Greek History

called Cyrus, and the herdsman, his supposed father, into his presence. And when they entered he looked upon Cyrus, and said : " Darest thou, the son of this fellow, thus foully entreat the son of a man who is the highest in my land ? " Cyrus answered boldly : " Sire, I have acted justly. The boys of the village made me their king, for they thought that I was fittest to rule them. Now, the others did as I bade, but this boy disobeyed, and defied me, until he got his reward. If this deserves punishment, behold, here I am."

Astyages marvelled at this brave answer, and, seeing the free and noble bearing of the boy, looked closer at him, and recognised the features and manner of his own family. The boy's age also agreed with the time which had elapsed since the birth of Mandane's son. Long he sat silent, pondering on the strange event. At last he dismissed Artembares, promising that he should have all justice, and sent Cyrus under a guard into the palace. When he was alone with the herdsman he asked who had given him the boy, and whence he was. The man answered that he was his own son. Then the king frowned, and said : " If thou tell me not the truth thy limbs shall answer for it," and bade send for the torturers. At this the man trembled, and fell on his knees, and told all he knew. Astyages retained him, and, being exceeding wroth, he sent for Harpagus, and said to him : " Harpagus, by what death didst thou slay my daughter's son ? " When Harpagus saw the herdsman standing near he knew that lying would not serve him ;

so he told how he had given the child to the man, and how the body had been brought three days after, and received burial at his own hands. Astyages was still full of anger against Harpagus, but, dissembling his passion, he said: "It is well. Long have I grieved for the death of the boy, and bitter words have I borne from my daughter Mandane. But now, seeing that he was dead, and is alive again, I will make a great feast, and sacrifice to the gods, who have preserved him. As for thee, send me thy son to be a companion to Cyrus, and come thyself to the banquet."

Glad was Harpagus when he heard these gracious words. So he made haste, and returned to his house, and sent the boy, a fair lad of thirteen years, his only son, to Astyages, charging him to do whatsoever the king bade. Then Harpagus told the glad tidings to his wife. But Astyages, when the boy came, slaughtered him, and cut his body in pieces; and some of the flesh he boiled, and some he roasted, and made all ready. And the guests came, and sat down to meat. The king and the other guests feasted on the flesh of sheep, but before Harpagus was set the flesh of his son; only the head and the hands and the feet were kept covered in a basket hard by. And when Harpagus seemed to have eaten his fill Astyages asked him how he liked the meat? Harpagus answered that he liked it very well. Then Astyages gave a sign to his servants, and they brought the head and the hands and feet, and showed them to Harpagus. He looked, and saw what he had

## 22 Stories from Greek History

done ; but he uttered no cry, nor changed colour, that man of iron, nor betrayed by any token what he felt. When the king asked him if he knew what beast it was whose flesh he had eaten he said : " I know ; the king has willed it, and it is well." Then he gathered up what remained of his son's body and carried that sad remnant home for burial.

After this Astyages called his wise men, and told them all things as they had come to pass. And they, when they heard how Cyrus had been made king by the boys of the village, declared that this was the fulfilment of the dream, and bade the king be of good cheer, for that all danger from the boy was now over. Astyages thought that they said well, and, calling Cyrus, he said to him : " Child, I have wronged thee, through too much faith in an idle dream. But, since thine own face has preserved thee, I will send thee with an escort to thy people, where thou wilt find a father and mother of another sort than Mithradates and his wife. Go thy ways, and peace be with thee." So Cyrus was brought in great state to Persia, and found joyful welcome from Cambyses and Mandane, who greeted him as one risen from the dead. On the way he had learnt his true parentage, having supposed hitherto that he was the son of Mithradates and Cyno. Yet he kept a grateful memory of his foster-parents, and never tired of singing the praises of Cyno. And Cyrus grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and skilled in all the manly exercises of the hardy Persian mountaineers.

There were other eyes, too, which were watching him from afar. Harpagus had not forgotten the horrible cruelty of Astyages, but was nursing in his dark spirit a deep and deadly hate. In the wrongs of Cyrus he saw the image of his own, and determined by means of the prince to wreak vengeance on the Median king. But first he prepared the minds of the Median nobles, going about among them, and fomenting their discontent at the harsh cruelty of Astyages, and whispering that they must pull down the Mede from his throne, and set up Cyrus in his place. When he thought that they were ripe for revolt he sent a letter to Cyrus, concealed in the body of a hare, which he gave to a slave to carry to Cyrus. Disguised as a hunter, the slave crossed the border in safety, and brought the hare to Cyrus, telling him to open the body when no one was by. And this was the letter conveyed in that strange envelope: "Son of Cambyzes, since thou art the favourite of the gods (else had they not saved thee from such perils), take heed to avenge thee of thy murderer. For by his will thou art dead, though by God's favour and my hand thou livest. Thou hast heard, I doubt not, from what a fate thou wast saved, and by whom. Hearken, therefore, unto me, and thou shalt rule over the land where Astyages now rules. Raise thy Persians, and march against the Medes. Whether I be chosen to command the Median army, or some other noble Mede, thou shalt gain thy end. For they will begin the revolt against Astyages, and go over to thy side.



## 24 Stories from Greek History

All things here are ready ; only do thou my bidding, and do it with speed."

Fired by this letter, Cyrus sent and called all the best warriors of Persia to meet him on an appointed day. When they were come he told them that Astyages had named him their leader. " My first command to you," said Cyrus, " shall be this : come hither to-morrow very early in the morning, and bring each of you a reaping-hook." At day-break they came, obedient to his word, and he showed them a vast piece of waste land, overgrown with thistles and brushwood. " This," he said, " you must clear before the sun goes down." The wondering Persians fell to work, and toiled all day. And the sun went down, and the land was cleared, ready for the plough. Then said Cyrus : " To-morrow wash yourselves clean, and put on your best attire, and come hither once more." Meanwhile he slew all his father's flocks and herds, and prepared great quantities of bread, and all good things, and made ready to entertain a great host. And on the morrow, when the Persians came, he made them welcome, and feasted them royally. When all had eaten their fill, and comforted their hearts with wine, Cyrus asked them how they liked their entertainment, and whether it were better or worse than the day before. And one laughed, and answered : " Great is the difference, my prince ! Yesterday was a day of hardship, but to-day is a day of good cheer." Then Cyrus took up the man's words, and discovered his whole purpose, saying : " Men of

Persia, hear how the matter stands. If ye will listen to me ye shall have such good cheer as this, and far better, every day of your lives, without any slavish toil. But if ye will not listen to me ye shall toil for ever, even as yesterday. Now hearken to what I shall say, and be free men: I believe that I, even I, was appointed by Heaven to this great end; and you I hold not worse, but far better, than the Medes, for every manly labour of war or peace. Follow me, and I will show you the way which leads to liberty and honour." At these words of Cyrus there went up a great shout from the hosts of Persia: "To Ecbatana! \* To Ecbatana! We will pull down the Mede, and set up Cyrus in his place!"

When Astyages heard what his grandson was doing he sent a herald, and summoned him into his presence. And Cyrus smiled a bitter smile, and said to the herald: "Go tell thy master that I will be there before he wants me." Away went the herald with his message, and the Persian army followed at his heels. Then that poor dotard, the old King of Media, god-lamed in wit, gave Harpagus the Mede, for whom he had once made so fair a feast, the command of all his forces. And now Harpagus spread a fair feast for him; for when the Persian army drew near, some few of the Medes, who had not been made privy to the plot, stood their ground, and fought; but of the rest some went over to the Persians, while the more part threw down their weapons, and fled.

\* Capital of Media.

## 26 Stories from Greek History

Not yet could Astyages read his fate, and he cried out : " Cyrus shall rue his treason yet." Then first he ordered all the soothsayers who had persuaded him to let Cyrus go to be impaled on sharp stakes, and when this was done he armed all the men of his city, young and old, and sallied forth to meet Cyrus. He was defeated, and taken captive. And as he stood surrounded by Persian guards Harpagus came up to him, and reviled him, and mocked him, saying : " How now, thou dog ! How likest thou the dessert to thy banquet ? But a little while and thou wast king, and now thou art a slave ! " Astyages looked at him, and asked if he were the author of this fair deed. " Ay," said Harpagus : " with my right hand I wrote it, and mine is the work." " Then art thou both rogue and fool," answered Astyages— " fool because thou hast given the crown to another which thou mightest have worn thyself ; and rogue because, to avenge a private wrong, thou hast made thy people slaves."

So fell Astyages, after a reign of five and thirty years. And Cyrus, after robbing him of his kingdom, did him no further harm, but he lived the rest of his days as his grandson's guest.

When Cyrus had conquered Lydia, as has been told already, he left Harpagus to complete the conquest by bringing over those Greek cities who had served Croesus, and marched himself, with the greater part of his army, into the heart of Asia. One nation after another fell before his arms, until at last he reached the great and mighty

city of Babylon, the ancient capital of Chaldæa.

“The city of the brazen gates” was one of the greatest wonders of the world. Built across the River Euphrates, in the form of a square, each side of which measured fifteen miles, it was defended by a deep moat, and a wall eighty feet broad and three hundred feet high, formed of baked bricks from the soil dug out of the moat. Along the top of the wall on each side ran a line of buildings, having a broad street between them, with space enough to turn a four-horse chariot. All the streets of the city ran in straight lines, intersecting one another at right angles. Through the midst went the broad stream of Euphrates, dividing Babylon into two equal halves. The cross-streets where they joined the river were defended by brazen gates, and two walls, following the windings of the river, defended the banks within the town. Within this vast rampart towered the huge pile of the royal palace, and the great Temple of Baal, the national deity of Chaldæa. A proud people were the Babylonians and a wise; deeply versed in all the lore of the stars, skilled in medicine, and masters of many secrets which they afterwards taught to the nations of Europe.

Against this haughty nation and this mighty city came Cyrus with a great host. He came with horses and with chariots, and great store of grain, and flocks and herds, to feed his army. Heavy mule waggons bore massive silver jars filled with

## 28 Stories from Greek History

the sacred water of Choaspes, the river which washes the walls of Sousa, Persia's capital—the only water which the Great King may drink. On his march he came to the broad and strong stream of Gyndes, a branch of the Tigris, and here one of the king's white horses, the sacred steeds which only the king may use, trying to cross the river, was swept away by the current, and drowned. Then the king rent his garments, and swore a great oath, saying : " Thou cursed river, that hast dared to take my steed, I will make thee so weak that a woman may cross thee without wetting her knee." Thereupon he set his army to dig ; and they divided the river into three hundred and sixty channels, a hundred and eighty on each side the river. In that work they wasted all the rest of the year. When the river was humbled, and the spring began to dawn, he marched on to Babylon, and routed her armies, and shut up the people in their walls. But the city was well stored with provision, her walls frowned like mighty cliffs on the invader, and the end seemed far off. Then Cyrus, either by his own wit, or by another's counsel, thought of a plan to subdue Babylon. On the banks of the Euphrates, before he flows into the city, there was a vast reservoir, many miles round, which an ancient queen of Chaldæa had made to control the rise of the river in flood-time, and store the overflow of the water. Cyrus stationed a strong division of his army at either end of the town, where the river enters, and where he leaves it,

ordering them, where they saw the water sink, to enter the town by the bed of the river. Then he went himself with many workmen, and opened the sluices which led into the reservoir, so that all the waters were turned aside, and the bed below became dry. Now, if the Babylonians had been warned in time they might have destroyed the whole Persian army ; for they had only to close the gates, where their streets ran down to the water-side, and line the walls along the banks with men, and the Persians would have been caught in a trap. As it was, the Persians found no resistance, but poured in overwhelming numbers into the town. So vast was the city that when the parts by the river were already taken those in the upper city knew nothing of what had happened, but were keeping a feast, and dancing and making merry. But when the Persians reached them they found other entertainment. And so proud Babylon fell.

Cyrus was now lord of all Western Asia. All the broad lands watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, the ancient kingdoms of Chaldæa and Assyria, Media, Lydia, his native Persia—all these bowed down before him, and called him master. He counted his conquests, and his heart swelled with pride. But a life of violence and warfare brings no rest to the spirit of man, and Cyrus looked about him for other realms to conquer. North of his empire lay the vast steppes of upper Asia, where the wild hordes of the great Tartar race roved in restless millions. Against one of

## 30 Stories from Greek History

these, called the Massagetæ, Cyrus now turned his arms. First he sent and offered marriage to Tomyris, Queen of the Massagetæ. But Tomyris was a brave and crafty woman; she knew that Cyrus was wooing, not her, but her kingdom, and she would have none of him. Then Cyrus led his army against her, and came to the River Araxes, which flows into the Caspian Sea. While he was preparing to throw a bridge over this river Tomyris sent him this message: "O king, cease from thy labour; perchance this work of thine shall end in thine own harm. Nay, cease! Rule thine own people, and suffer me to rule over mine. But if thy desire be so great to make trial of the Massagetæ, then leave bridging the river, and we will go away three days' journey from this side the river, that ye may cross over unhindered into our land. Or if ye would rather that we cross into your land, then do ye likewise."

On receiving this message Cyrus took counsel with his chief men, and most advised him to retire from the Araxes, and wait for Tomyris in his own land. But Croesus the Lydian, who followed Cyrus wherever he went, was against this. "Shame it were, O king," said Croesus, "to suffer the Persian to set foot on Persian soil—a shame, and a great danger. Mighty thou art, but mortal, and Time's envy waits on mortal feet, to cast the mightiest down. If thy foe get the mastery, thou art lost, and thy kingdom with thee. Hear now my counsel: lead thy army across the river, and follow the host of Tomyris,

and when thou art gone a good way take of thy sheep and thy oxen, and slay, and prepare a great feast, with store of good things, and plenty of wine. When all is ready leave such as are weakest in thy army behind, and draw off with the rest towards the river. By these means I believe that we shall gain a great victory."

This pleased Cyrus, and he sent to tell Tomyris that he would meet her on her side of the river. Then he gave Croesus into the hands of his son Cambyses, charging him to treat the conquered king with all honour and love, and, having sent them back to Persia, prepared himself to cross. When all had passed over Cyrus lay down to sleep in the land of Tomyris, and while he slept he had a strange vision: he saw Darius, son of Hystaspes, one of the royal race of Persia, and, behold! upon the shoulders of Darius there grew mighty wings, and Asia lay in the shadow of one wing, and Europe in the shadow of the other. In the morning he sent for Hystaspes, who was with his army, and said to him: "Hystaspes, the gods have warned me in a dream that thy son Darius is plotting against me. Go thou, therefore, with all speed to Persia, and take heed that when I come from conquering this people thou bring him to me to give account of his deeds."

Had he read the vision aright, that proud and presumptuous Cyrus, he would have known that it was Heaven's purpose to take away the kingdom from his house, and give it to the house of Hystaspes. So Hystaspes departed; and Cyrus,



## 32 Stories from Greek History

when he had gone a day's march from the Araxes, did according to the counsel of Croesus. He prepared a great feast, and drew off with the better part of his army, leaving the weaker sort to await the coming of the Massagetæ. And a third part of the army of Tomyris came to the place, slew those whom they found, sat down to the banquet, and when they were full of meat and wine lay down in their places, and slept. While they were sleeping Cyrus fell upon them, and slew many, and took prisoners many more than he slew, and among the last the son of Tomyris.

When the queen heard what Cyrus had done she sent a herald, and spake thus: "Thou blood-thirsty Cyrus, boast not thyself if with the fruit of the vine, wherewith when ye fill yourselves ye grow so mad that as the wine goes down words of folly float upward—if with such a vile drug thou hast mastered my son, and not in battle by the strong hand. Now, I will give thee good counsel, and mark well my words: give me back my son, and go away unharmed from this land, content that thou hast done despite unto the third part of my army. But if thou wilt not do this, I swear by the Sun, the lord of Massagetæ, that, blood-thirsty as thou art, thou shalt drink thy fill of blood." But her words fell on unheeding ears. When her son, whose name was Spargapises, came to his senses, and the wine had left him, and he saw his evil plight, he begged Cyrus that his chains might be taken off; and as soon as he was free he seized a sword, and slew himself.

Then Tomyris, seeing that Cyrus would not give ear unto her words, gathered all her forces, and gave battle to the Persians. That was the greatest and most savage fight which the world had yet seen. First they stood apart, and shot with their bows ; then, when all their arrows were spent, they rushed upon one another, and fought with spear and sword and dagger ; they hacked and hewed, they cut and they stabbed—Persian grappling with Scythian, and Scythian with Persian. At length most of the Persians were slain, and with them fell Cyrus. When the battle was over Tomyris filled a goatskin with blood, and, searching long, at last found the body of Cyrus ; and, having found it, she thrust the head into that red bath, and said : “ Thou hast undone me, though I live thy conqueror, for thou hast slain my son by guile, but I, as I swore it, will give thee thy fill of blood.”

So ended Cyrus the Great.

## The Treasury of Rhampsinitus

**T**HERE was once a king of Egypt who had vast treasures, and, wishing to keep them safe, he built a strong chamber of stone adjoining his palace wall. Now, the architect who had charge of the work was a rogue, and he contrived that one stone in the outer wall of the treasure-chamber was left so as to be easily removed by two men, or even by one. When the treasury was finished the king stored in it all his wealth. And the man who had contrived the unlawful entrance to the chamber made no use of it for himself, but when his end drew near he called his two sons to his side, and told them the exact position of the stone, and how it might be removed. "This secret," he said, "I have kept for you, that ye might be rich—for, knowing this, ye are the king's treasurers." And, having discovered his secret, he died.

His sons were not slow in making use of their knowledge. They went to the chamber, easily removed the stone, and bore away a handsome booty. When next the king visited his treasury he wondered to see that the tale of his treasure was short, but knew not whom he should blame, finding the chamber locked and the seals un-

## The Treasury of Rhampsinitus 35

broken. This happened twice and three times, the treasure growing each time less ; for the thieves had an itching palm. Then the king bade his servants set snares about the vessels in which the gold and the silver were stored. The thieves soon came again, and the first who entered was caught in one of the snares. Then he called to his brother, and said : " Brother, I am caught ! Snares are set about all the vessels. Come now, and cut off my head, and carry it away with thee, lest when I be taken I betray thee also, my brother." His brother liked the advice, so he entered, and cut off his head, put it in a sack, which he had with him to carry the treasure, and went his way.

In the morning early the king visited his treasury, and lo ! there he saw a headless corpse lying where it was caught in the snare. And the king marvelled, for he could find no entrance to the chamber other than the sealed doors, and no exit. Full of perplexity, he ordered the corpse of the thief to be hanged on the outer wall. Then he set guards over the body, and straitly charged them, saying : " If any ye see weeping and mourning over the dead, bring them hither to me."

When the mother of the thief saw her son's headless body thus hanging in shame she was in sore distress, and reproached the son who had slain him, and bade him contrive some means to get back the body : " And if thou regard not my words I will go and tell the king that thou art the thief." In vain he tried to persuade her from

## 36 Stories from Greek History

her purpose ; she would not be comforted, and dealt hardly with him, and reviled him. Seeing that she was not to be moved he set his wits to work, and contrived a cunning device. He harnessed his asses, and loaded them with goatskins full of wine, and drave them before him. And when he came to the place where the guards were watching the body he loosened the stoppers of one or two of the wineskins, so that the wine ran out. Then he beat his breast, and cried aloud, and made as though he were in great perplexity, not knowing which way to turn. So he made great uproar, stamping and tearing his hair, and crying : " O the wine ! the good wine ! The good wine is running away ! I shall lose all my good wine ! " Loud laughed the guards, and thought here was a fool indeed ; and they took earthen vessels, and made haste, and caught the wine as it ran : for most men love to drink and not pay. And he with the asses cursed them, and called them knaves ; but by-and-by, when they gave him good words, he seemed to abate his anger, and drave his asses to the roadside to set their burdens aright. The soldiers talked with him, and one made a merry jest, causing them to laugh, so he gave them a goatskin full of wine to help their wit. Down sat the guards, and began to make good cheer ; and one of them said : " Sit down, comrade, and drink with us " ; so they drank together, and the mirth grew louder and louder. And one raised his cup, and cried : " Health to the noble giver ! " And the toast went

round, all shouting together : " Health to the noble giver ! " Then they embraced him and hugged him with drunken rapture. When the skin was empty he gave them another ; and the soldiers drank and drank again, until they all became exceeding drunk, and sank down in their places, and slept. By this time it was far into the night ; so he, wishing to leave the guards a memorial of the revel, shaved all their right cheeks. Then he took his brother's body down, laid it on one of his asses, and departed.

In the morning the king heard that the body was gone, and his guards lying in drunken sleep, with half their beards shaved off. And being exceeding wroth with the man who had mocked him thus, he resolved by all means to find him. Therefore he made proclamation that the beautiful princess his daughter would receive every night a single guest to supper, and he ordered his daughter to ask each guest before he departed what was the most wicked and cunning thing he had ever done. All were bidden, each in his turn, and she might refuse none. The thief, who saw the king's purpose, resolved to outdo him in cunning. So he sent in his name among the first, and was bidden to supper. Then he disguised his face, and put on his best attire, and hidden in the folds of his raiment he carried a human arm, cut from a fresh corpse. When he came to the palace he found the lovely maiden alone in a private apartment, and all things ready for a delicate supper. She received him graciously,

## 38 Stories from Greek History

and after they had supped she asked him the question. And he answered: "The most wicked thing I ever did was when I cut off my brother's head in the king's treasury; and the most cunning thing I ever did was when I made the guards drunk, and stole my brother's body." Saying this, he dashed down one lamp with his hand, overthrew the other with his foot, and made for the door. The princess sprang after him, to hold him; and he turned, and thrust the severed arm into her hands, which she seized in the darkness, all warm from the living man's body, and held, thinking that she had him fast. But he, strong and fearless man, dashed one of the guards who were waiting against the wall, hurled another down the steps, and escaped.

Then at last anger gave way to admiration in the king's mind, and he sent and made proclamation again in all the cities of his realm, promising forgiveness and great rewards to that bold and crafty man; only let him declare himself, that the king might know him. And he, having full trust in the king's word, came to the palace, and stood before the throne. "Great are thy gifts, bold youth," said the monarch; "wisest are the Egyptians among the nations; and among all the Egyptians wisest art thou." And he gave him his daughter to wife.

## Cambyses the Madman

**W**HEN Cyrus was dead, his son Cambyses became King of Persia. And first he planned the conquest of Egypt, seeing that it was a fair land and a large, rich in corn, and old in wisdom. His road lay through Palestine, where dwelt the Jews and Phœnicians. From Gaza on to Egypt the way was difficult and dangerous, for he had to pass the great Serbonian bog, "where armies whole have sunk," and for three days there was a waterless desert. After the conquest of Egypt by the Persians provision was made for travellers who had to cross this desert. And it was made in this wise : great quantities of wine were brought into Egypt in earthen jars from Phœnicia and Greece, and the governor of every town had charge to see that these jars were filled with water as fast as the wine was consumed, and sent into that desert region. But as yet no such provision had been made, so Cambyses made a treaty with the King of Arabia, and persuaded him to promise safe conduct. First, the messengers who were sent on that errand had to swear on Cambyses' behalf that the Persians meant no harm to the Arabians or their land. And this was the manner of their oath : the King



## 40 Stories from Greek History

of Arabia stood on one side, and the Persians on the other, and between them stood a priest of the Arabians ; and the priest took a sharp stone, and cut the inner part of their hands, and drew blood ; then he plucked a flock of wool from their garments, and wiped off the blood on seven stones which lay in their midst, calling aloud on the gods of Arabia. So when the oath was finished the Arabian prepared for the coming of Cambyses. He made great water-bags of whole camel-hides, and filled them with water, and laid them on his camels, and drove into the desert to wait for the coming of the Persians.

While this was being done Psammenitus, King of Egypt, had pitched his camp by the eastern mouth of the Nile, ready to do battle for his kingdom. In his army were certain Greeks and Carians, serving for hire. One of these, named Phanes, had deserted to Cambyses, and helped him greatly in his designs against Egypt by the information he had brought. So when the Persians came in sight, those Greeks took vengeance for their master thus : they seized all the sons of Phanes, whom he had left in Egypt, brought them into the open space between the two armies, slaughtered them before their father's eyes, caught their blood in a great bowl, and, having poured in water, drank of that dreadful vintage, and forthwith rushed to battle. The struggle was long and fierce, but at last the Egyptians were routed. After the battle each side collected their dead, and left them in heaps

on the ground. And years later the bones might still be seen, the skulls of the Persians so thin that you might break them with a small pebble, those of the Egyptians so thick and strong that you could hardly crack them with a great stone. For the Egyptians shave their heads, and go uncovered from childhood in the fiercest sun, and this hardens the bone ; but the Persians love to be in the shade, and keep their heads swathed in great turbans.

The Egyptians fled from the battlefield in disorder, and shut themselves up in Memphis, which we now call Cairo. Cambyses sent a herald in a ship up the river, and commanded them to yield. But they, when they saw the ship approaching, poured out of the city, wrecked the ship, tore the herald and all the crew to pieces, and carried the mangled fragments back with them into the town. After a long siege Memphis was taken. Ten days after he became master of the place, Cambyses set Psammenitus, who had reigned only six months, with other great men of Egypt, in a place outside the gates, and made trial of his spirit thus : he sent the daughter of Psammenitus and other maidens of the first in the land with her, clothed as slaves, and bearing pitchers on their heads, to fetch water from a well near the place where her father stood. As the maidens went past their fathers with weeping and wailing, all the other nobles of Egypt wept and mourned aloud at their daughters' shame ; but Psammenitus looked, and bowed his head without a sound.

## 42 Stories from Greek History

When the water-carriers had passed, Cambyses sent the son of Psammenitus, with other Egyptian youths of the same age, with ropes round their necks and bridles in their mouths. These were brought to pay the price of the men whom the Egyptians had butchered in the ship ; for the royal judges of Persia had decreed that for each man there slain ten of the first in Egypt should perish. And when Psammenitus saw them pass, and learnt that they were being led to their death, he bowed his head again, but made no sound. Then when these were gone by there came a man who was once a guest and friend of the King of Egypt in the days of his prosperity, but had now lost his all, and was asking alms in the army. Him when Psammenitus saw, he cried and wept aloud, and called his old friend by name, and beat his breast. Now, there were guards set near who watched all that he did as these went by, and brought word to Cambyses. And Cambyses wondered when he heard it, and sent and asked why he, who had shed no tear at his son's death and his daughter's shame, now wept aloud for the beggar. And this was the answer which he heard : " Son of Cyrus, my son's and my daughter's woes were too deep for tears ; but tears might pay my sorrow for my old familiar friend, who is fallen from his high estate, and brought to beggary in his old age." Croesus, and the Persians in the train of Cambyses, wept when they heard this ; and even Cambyses was moved, and he ordered the son of Psammenitus

to be spared, and Psammenitus to be brought before him. The son they found already slain ; but they brought the father, and set him before the king. For some time he lived as a guest of Persia ; but afterwards he was found conspiring with the Egyptians, and drank poison, and died.

From Memphis, Cambyses went to Sais, where the kings of Egypt were buried. There he brought forth the embalmed body of Amasis, father of Psammenitus, and ordered his servants to pluck out the hairs of the corpse, and stab it with goads, and scourge it. And seeing that they did it little harm (for the dried flesh was tough, and resisted stoutly), he ordered the mummy to be burned. Now, this was a sin, even to the Persians : for they think that fire is a god. But the Egyptians hold that fire is a beast, and devours all that it can reach, and then dies with its prey. Therefore they will in no wise burn a corpse, but embalm it carefully, and keep it, that the soul of the dead may have a house to dwell in.

South of Egypt dwell the Ethiopians, called the long-lived. Here is the Table of the Sun ; for so they call a certain meadow outside the city, where earth, quickened by the sun's powerful rays, puts forth, instead of fruits, the roast flesh of all kinds of four-footed beasts. Every night the wondrous banquet grows, and in the morning they come and feast. Wishing to learn more of this strange folk, Cambyses sent spies to spy out the land. With them he sent gifts, a purple robe, and a necklace of gold, and bracelets, an alabaster

## 44 Stories from Greek History

box of myrrh, and a cask of palm wine. So when the spies came to Ethiopia they presented their gifts to the king, and said : " Cambyses, King of the Persians, has sent us to have speech with thee, and sends thee gifts of those things wherein his own heart hath chief delight." Then the King of Ethiopia answered, and said : " Neither has the King of Persia sent you to bring gifts, nor do ye tell the truth. Nay, to spy out my land have ye come, and an unrighteous man is he who sent you. If he were righteous he would not desire other land than his own, nor make slaves of those who have done him no wrong. Now, give him this bow, and carry back my words. Thus saith the King of Ethiopia to the King of Persia : when the Persians can string this great bow as easily as ye see me do it then let them come with an exceeding great host, and make war on the long-lived Ethiopians ; but till they can do this let them give thanks to the gods that they put it not into the hearts of the sons of Ethiopia to lust after other lands than their own."

So saying, he unstrung the bow, and gave it to the messengers. Then he took the robe, asking what it was, and how it was made ; and being told the nature of purple dye, he said : " Deceitful are the men, and deceitful is their raiment." Next he inquired about the necklace and the bracelets ; and they told him of goldsmiths and their art ; but he, thinking the things to be fetters, laughed, and said : " We have stronger fetters than these." But the wine pleased him greatly. In return for



The Procession of the Sacred Bull—"Apis-Osiris"



their gifts the king showed them the wonders of Ethiopia—a spring of water so light that nothing will float on it, and so pure that they who bathe in it come forth shining with lustrous beauty, and they who drink of it live for a hundred and twenty years and more; a gaol where all the prisoners were bound with fetters of massy gold, and tombs of crystal set all round the city, showing all the form and features of the dead within them.

When Cambyzes heard the answer of the King of Ethiopia he fell into a passion of anger, and set off, just as he was, with all his army, to carry war into the ends of the earth. On his arrival at Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, he sent off fifty thousand of his troops with orders to burn down the great temple of Ammon, and marched himself with the rest of his army against the Ethiopians. But before he had finished the fifth part of the way all the provisions of the host were consumed. For some time they lived on the flesh of the beasts of burden, and when that failed they devoured roots and herbs. At last, being driven to extremity, they drew lots by tens, and on whom the lot fell him the other nine slew and devoured. This was too much even for Cambyzes; so they turned, and struggled back, such as were left of them, to Thebes. But of those fifty thousand who were sent against Ammon not one was ever seen again; for a great storm arose, and the sands of the desert heaved and lifted themselves up like the billows of the sea, and swallowed them all.



## 46 Stories from Greek History

On his return to Memphis, Cambyses found all the city full of rejoicing; for the great god Osiris had appeared, taking, as was his wont, the form of a black bull, with a white square on his forehead, the figure of an eagle on his back, and that of a beetle on his tongue. Such a beast, as you may suppose, is rare, and when a bull is born with these marks the Egyptians call him Apis, and say that the god Osiris dwells in him. Now, Cambyses thought that the Egyptians were rejoicing at his defeat, so he sent for the magistrates of Memphis, and asked how they dared to mock him thus. They told him about Apis, but he said that they lied, and put them all to death. Then he summoned the priests, and when they told him the same tale he bade them bring this tame god before him. The priests went and fetched Apis; and Cambyses drew his dagger, and would have smitten him in the belly; but he missed, and wounded the poor beast in the thigh. Then he laughed, and said: "Behold thy god, O Egypt! Worthy are ye to have such gods, clothed in flesh and blood, and feeling the steel. Woe unto you that mock me thus!" And he ordered his servants to scourge the priests, and kill every Egyptian whom they found making holiday. But Apis was led away bleeding, and bellowing with pain; and soon after he died, and was buried privily by the priests.

Then Cambyses, who had never been wholly master of his wits, fell into such a frenzy that no one was safe from his rage. And first he lifted

up his hand against his brother Smerdis, whom he had dismissed from Egypt through envy, because he alone of all the Persians had been able to draw the bow which the spies had brought from Ethiopia. After Smerdis was gone back to Persia Cambyzes dreamed that a messenger came to Egypt with the tidings that Smerdis was seated on the royal throne, and touching the skies with his head. Alarmed by the vision, he sent Prexaspes, one of the noblest of the Persians, to slay him ; and this he did, some say, by hurling him over the cliffs into the sea, others by a treacherous blow while they were hunting together.

Next, the fury of Cambyzes fell upon his sister, whom he had wed, contrary to the law of the Persians and of all nations. For the judges of Persia, when he asked whether it were lawful to wed a sister, answered that they could find no law allowing it, but that they had found another law, which ordained that the king might do as he would. Thus they saved the law, and saved themselves. Concerning this woman's death two tales are told. The Greeks say that she was watching a fight between a lion's whelp and a young hound ; and at first the lion's whelp got the better, but the brother of the hound, who was chained near, broke his chain, and came to the help of the other, and the two together got the mastery. And the woman, sitting by Cambyzes, wept when she saw this. He asked her why she wept, and she answered : " Because when I saw the hound helping his brother I remembered

## 48 Stories from Greek History

Smerdis, who had none to avenge him." But the Egyptians say that while they were sitting at table she took a lettuce, and, stripping off the outer leaves, asked Cambyses whether it were fairer thus or before it was stripped. He answered: "Before it was stripped." Then said his sister and wife: "Yet this stripped lettuce thou hast imitated, stripping the house of Cyrus." At these words he leapt upon her, and hurt her so grievously that she died.

Another time he said to Prexaspes, who stood high in his favour, and whose son was his cup-bearer: "Prexaspes, what manner of man do the Persians deem me to be, and what language do they hold concerning me?" Prexaspes answered: "My lord, in all else thou art highly praised, but they say that thou art too much given to wine." Hearing this Cambyses was wroth, and cried: "The Persians call me drunkard, and mad with wine! I will show thee whether I be mad or they." Then he took his bow, and said as he fitted an arrow to the string: "Now, if when I shoot I strike thy son standing there in the doorway through the midst of his heart, then are the Persians proven fools; but if I miss, then they say well, calling me wine-bibber." And he drew his bow, and shot, and the boy fell dead. Then Cambyses ordered the body to be opened, that all might see where the wound lay. And when he saw that the arrow had pierced the boy's heart the king laughed, and was full of delight. "Look thou, Prexaspes," he cried. "See whether I be

mad, or the Persians! But tell me, hast thou ever seen among men such an archer as I am?" Prexaspes, seeing the foam upon his lips, and his eyes rolling in frenzy, feared for his own life, and replied: "My lord, methinks that even Apollo himself could scarce have made so fair a shot."

Yet another time Cambyzes took twelve of the noblest of the Persians, against whom he had no fair complaint, and buried them head downwards. Then Croesus sought to restrain his fury, remembering the charge which Cyrus had given; but Cambyzes ordered him to be seized, and led away to death. The guards, who knew his mood, hid away Croesus, and waited to see if the king would change his mind. Not long after Cambyzes repented of his order, and when they knew this they told him that Croesus was alive. "I am glad," said Cambyzes, "that he lives; and they who have saved him shall have their reward." Then he ordered those who had hidden away Croesus to be executed for disobeying his commands.

The following incident illustrates the savage and terrible humour of Cambyzes:—There was a certain Sisamnes, one of the royal judges, who was convicted of giving false judgment for a bribe. Cambyzes ordered him to be put to death, and his skin to be stripped off, and made into leather. Then he caused the skin, thus prepared, to be cut into straps, and the straps to be used to form a seat for the judge's throne. Finally, he appointed the

## 50 Stories from Greek History

son of Sisamnes as his successor, warning him to remember on what throne he sat.

While Cambyses tarried in Egypt, raging against gods and men, two Medes of the tribe of the Magi, one of whom Cambyses had left as steward of his house, conspired against him. One of them was the living image of Smerdis, whom Cambyses had slain, and bore the same name. So the brother of this Smerdis, knowing that the murder of the true Smerdis had been kept secret, resolved to profit by the likeness. Having persuaded Smerdis, and promised to manage the whole matter, he led him to the palace, and set him on the royal throne. Then he sent heralds, and proclaimed that all men should obey Smerdis as king. When the news was brought to Cambyses, at first he thought that Prexaspes had betrayed him, but inquiring further into the matter, he became assured that Smerdis his brother was really dead. Then he questioned the herald as to who had given him the message, and he answered that he had received it from the Mede who had been left as steward of the palace. Then the whole truth was clear : Smerdis indeed, but another Smerdis, was sitting on the royal throne, and the dream of Cambyses was fulfilled. And the king's heart smote him when he knew that he had killed his brother in vain. He called for his horse, intending to ride straight to Sousa, and put down the usurper. But as he sprang into the saddle the cap of his sword-sheath fell off, and the point of the sword pierced his thigh. Knowing that he

was hurt unto his death he inquired the name of the place, and they answered that it was named Ecbatana. Now, an oracle had told him that he was destined to die in Ecbatana ; and he thought that Ecbatana of Media was signified, where is the summer palace of the Persian king, high up in the cool mountains. But this Ecbatana where he was is a town in Syria. Therefore, finding himself caught in the strong meshes of fate, Cambyses at last came to his wits, and repented him of all the evil he had done. And he called his nobles, and told them all the truth : how he had murdered Smerdis to avert the fulfilment of a dream, and thus, like a beast flying from the hunter, had fallen into the toils. " But I charge you," he said, " nobles of Persia, and you especially of the royal house, suffer ye not the kingdom to pass again to the Medes. If they have prevailed by guile, let guile be used against them ; if by force, by force overthrow them. If ye do this, I pray that the earth give you her increase, and your wives be blessed with children, and your flocks and herds with young. But if ye do not, then may a curse light on your lands and on your wives and on your flocks, and may ye all die thus miserably as ye see me die." Then all the Persians rent their clothes, and wept over their king and his evil state. And soon after the wound mortified, and ate into the bone, and Cambyses died by the very death whereby he had slain Apis.

## Polycrates Tyrant of Samos

“Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!  
We will not think of themes like these:  
It made Anacreon’s song divine:  
He served—but served Polycrates—  
A tyrant but our masters then  
Were still at least our countrymen.”

**S**O sang the poet, when Greece was under the heel of the Turk, and her nobler spirits looked back with sad and longing eyes to the glories of her past. The life of Polycrates lies within the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyzes. Born a private citizen of Samos, one of the chief islands of the Ægean Sea, which divides Greece from the mainland of Asia, he raised a force, put down the few leading families who governed Samos, and made himself master of the island. He made an alliance with Amasis, King of Egypt; and soon the power of Polycrates became very great, and was noised abroad throughout all Greece, for wherever he turned his arms, all fell before him. Lord of a hundred fifty-oared galleys and a thousand bowmen, he sailed the seas plundering friend and foe. “For,” said he, “I please my friends better by giving them back what I have taken from them than if I had never taken it at

all." Many islands he conquered, and many cities of the coast. Stronger and stronger flowed the tide of his success, until Amasis grew alarmed for his friend, fearing that so rapid an ascent would be followed by a grievous fall. So he sat down, and wrote a letter to Polycrates, to this effect :

" Thus saith Amasis to Polycrates: 'Tis sweet to hear of the good fortune of a guest and friend ; yet thy great successes please me not, for I know that the gods are envious of men. I wish myself and those I care for sometimes to succeed, and sometimes to fail, and so to pass their lives taking their share of good and ill. For I never yet heard of any who was not cut off in the end, root and branch, after a life of unbroken prosperity. Now hearken to me, and appease Heaven's envy thus : consider what thou hast, of all thy possessions, whose loss would vex thee most, and cast it away, so that it shall never come to men's eyes again. And if after thou hast done this thy good things are not mixed with evil, strive in the manner I have told thee to heal the harm."

When Polycrates read this letter he thought that Amasis said well, and began to consider which of all his treasures he valued most. Now, among his jewels he had a costly ring, an emerald set in gold, and choicely graven by a famous artist. This ring he determined to cast into the sea. So he manned his state galley, and put out into the deep, and when he was now far from land he stood up on the high deck in the hinder part of the ship, took off his ring, and in the sight of all



## 54 Stories from Greek History

those that were with him cast it into the deep sea. Then he rowed back, shut himself up in his palace, and sorrowed as though he had lost a friend.

Not many days after there came to the doors of Polycrates a man carrying a great fish, and asked an audience of the prince. It was granted, and he came and stood before Polycrates, and said : " O king, I have caught this great fish, and I would not carry it to the market, though I am a poor man, and live by the work of my hands, for it seemed worthy of thee and thy mightiness. Therefore I have brought it, and give it to thee." Right pleased was that proud prince by the honest fisherman's praise, and he said : " Thou hast done exceeding well, and I thank thee for thy gift, and yet more for thy fair speech, and I bid thee to dinner." A proud and happy man was that fisher, and he went, dreaming of great things, to his home. But when the cooks came to open the fish they found in his belly the ring of Polycrates, and brought it joyfully to their master. And when he saw it he said : " It is God's hand," and sat down quickly, and wrote to Amasis of the strange event. On reading the letter Amasis was astonished, and cried : " Now of a truth I perceive that no man may avoid his fate. Polycrates, thou art doomed ! And, lest I perish with thee, I will cast thee off." Thereupon he wrote to Polycrates, renouncing his alliance.

Not long afterwards the fears of Amasis were justified. And thus it came to pass : Lydia at this time was governed by the Persian Oroetes,

## Polycrates Tyrant of Samos 55

who had been made satrap, or viceroy, by Cyrus after he had conquered Croesus. This same Oroetes had a grudge against Polycrates, envying his success, and thinking it a reproach that a Greek should build up such a power at the very threshold of the great Persian empire. Some say that Polycrates had offended Oroetes by turning his back on a herald sent by the Persian satrap concerning some matter, who had interrupted Polycrates in a conversation with the poet Anacreon. Whatever the cause, Oroetes determined on his ruin. Knowing that Polycrates was making great plans of conquest, he sent him this message :

“Thus saith Oroetes to Polycrates: I have heard that thou harbourest high designs, and that thy wealth is not equal to thy thoughts. Do thou therefore thus, and prosper thyself, and save me : seeing that Cambyzes the king intends my death, carry me and all my treasure to Samos, and share my riches with me ; for if gold can make thee great, thou shalt be the greatest in Greece. If thou believest not as touching my wealth, send a trusty servant to report concerning it.”

Polycrates was caught by the cunning bait, and sent his secretary to bring back word concerning the treasures of Oroetes. Then Oroetes prepared for the coming of the secretary in this wise : he took eight mighty chests, and filled them full of stones, with a thin layer of gold on the top. So the secretary came, and was astonished at the hoard, and brought back word to his master.

## 56 Stories from Greek History

Having heard his report, Polycrates made ready to go to Sardis, though all his friends sought to dissuade him, and prophets lifted up their voices in warning. Moreover, his daughter had a dream, in which she saw Polycrates hanging in the air, and washed by Zeus, and anointed by Apollo. And being full of fear from her vision she besought her father earnestly not to go on this errand. But he stiffened his neck, and hearkened not to his daughter's prayers ; for he was marked for death. And when he was set in the ship, and the rowers were at their places, she stood on the shore, and cried to him to come back. And he grew angry, and threatened her, saying : " Daughter, if I return safe, long shall be thy maidenhood ! " She answered : " Would to God it were so ! Better a maiden than an orphan." So he put off from Samos, and came to the shore of Asia. And as soon as he set foot on land Orcetes seized him, put him to death in a manner not to be named, and nailed his body on a cross. And thus he fulfilled all his daughter's dream : Zeus, the god of the sky, sent his rain, and washed him ; and Apollo, god of the sun, anointed him, drawing the natural moisture from his body.

So did Polycrates exalt himself, and so was he abased.

## How Darius became King

**Y**OU remember the solemn charge which Cambyses gave to the Persian nobles who stood around his death-bed. Now, the Persians did not believe him, for they thought that Cambyses had invented the story about his brother's death out of spite, to make him suspected of the Persians, and line his crown with thorns. And Prexaspes stoutly denied the murder, fearing for himself now that Cambyses was dead. So for seven months the Magian, commonly called Smerdis Magus, ruled undisturbed. And after his fall the people mourned him as a benefactor, for he had made them free of taxation and military service for three years.

The first to suspect that the new king was not the real Smerdis was a certain Otanes, one of the noblest of the Persians. This Otanes noticed that Smerdis always kept himself shut up in his palace, and never summoned any of the leading Persians before him. Now, among the wives of Cambyses, who passed with the crown to Smerdis, was a woman named Phædyne, daughter of Otanes. Inquiring of her concerning her husband's manner of life, Otanes grew more and more suspicious. So he sent and laid his com-

## 58 Stories from Greek History

mand upon his daughter, saying : " Daughter, I believe that thy husband is not the son of Cyrus, but some other man. Child of Persia, thou must not live longer in shame ! If we are deceived, be it thine to discover the cheat. Thus shalt thou do : when the king is sleeping, feel, and see if he has ears. If he has not, he is not the true Smerdis." For the Magian Smerdis had lost his ears in punishment for a crime. Phædyme when she heard this was sore afraid, for, indeed, it was a great peril ; nevertheless, she obeyed, and one night, when Smerdis was sleeping heavily, she arose, and felt with trembling fingers for his ears—and lo ! he had none. In the morning she sent and told her father, saying : " Smerdis has no ears ! "

When Otanes heard this he went and told two other Persians, and these three joined to themselves three more, and Darius, son of Hystaspes, arriving just at that moment at Sousa, they resolved to add him to their band. So these seven took counsel together ; and some were for delaying, and calling more to help them, but Darius urged them to go instantly to the palace, and slay the usurper. Another, Gobryas, was of the same opinion, and cried : " What, nobles of Persia, shall we submit another hour to be ruled by a Mede—and a Mede with no ears ? "

Meanwhile the two Magi had been contriving a little plot of their own. Knowing that Prexaspes had suffered at the hands of Cambyes, and that he alone was privy to the murder of Smerdis,

they determined to make him of their party, for they thought that it would be a tower of strength to have so great a man on their side. So they called him to them, and promised him great rewards if he would help them. Prexaspes seemed to like their words, and they went on, and said : "Learn now what thou must do : we will call hither the Persians, and when they are come then go thou up to a high place of the palace, and declare before all that Smerdis is the true son of Cyrus, and no other." Prexaspes agreed, and straightway the Magi sent and called the Persians, and when they were come Prexaspes stood on a high place of the palace, and spake. He spake of the royal line of Persia, beginning with Achæmenes, the founder of the house, down to Cyrus ; he reminded the Persians of all the benefits which they had received from Cyrus ; and having come thus far he lifted up his hands, and cried : "Behold in me the slayer of his son ! Those men who stand yonder"—pointing to the Magi—"are liars and robbers. If ye restore not the kingdom, and take not vengeance on them, then may a curse light on you and on your sons' sons for ever ! " When he had said this he leapt from the tower, and was dashed to pieces on the pavement below.

While this was happening the seven conspirators were on their way to the palace. On the road they heard of the confession and death of Prexaspes. These tidings gave them pause. They stood by the wayside, and disputed together.

## 60 Stories from Greek History

Darius was unshaken in his purpose, but the others doubted. Suddenly there was a sound of tumult in the air, and they lifted up their eyes, and saw a sign. Behold! seven pairs of falcons were pursuing two pairs of vultures, and rending and tearing them with beak and claws. Then Darius cried: "It is an omen: the seven pairs of falcons are we seven, and the two pairs of vultures are the foul Medes." So on they went to the palace. And the guards seeing seven of the highest in the land, and suspecting nothing, let them pass without question. But when they came to the private chambers of the king the doorkeepers barred the way, and they, drawing their daggers, slew the doorkeepers, and rushed on.

All this time the Magi were sitting in anxious debate concerning the death and confession of Prexaspes. Suddenly they were startled by an uproar of conflict, and the groans of dying men. They ran to see the cause, and, seeing their servants slain, sped back to seize their weapons. One snatched a bow and arrows, the other a spear; and straightway the seven were upon them. He with the spear struck one of the seven, and put out his eye; another he wounded in the thigh. The other Magian, finding no use for his arrows, fled into an inner chamber, and would have closed the doors. But two of the seven, Darius and Gobryas, burst in after him; and Gobryas grappled with the Magian, so that they rolled together on the floor. Darius paused,

## How Darius became King 61

fearing lest he should strike Gobryas in the dark. But Gobryas cried: "Why standest thou idle by?" "For fear lest I strike thee," answered Darius. "Strike," said Gobryas, "and thrust thy sword through us both." So Darius struck, and happily slew only the Magian. Then those five of the seven who were not injured cut off the Magians' heads, and rushed into the town with loud uproar, calling on the Persians to come to their aid, and showing the heads of the slaughtered Magians. And the Persians arose, and drew their daggers, and slew every Mede of the tribe of the Magi whom they met. And if night had not come on they would have left none alive. Therefore the Persians ever afterwards kept this day as a great holiday. And no Magian might be seen abroad on that day, but must keep himself close, and remain in his house.

So fell the usurper, and the king-maker, his brother. And all the line of Cyrus being now dead, there arose the question who should be king. Long and anxious was the debate among the seven, and at last it was resolved that they should meet next morning on horseback at an appointed place outside the walls, and he whose horse neighed first when the sun arose was to be king. For the horse was sacred to the sun, whom the Persians worshipped and honoured exceedingly, and the neighing of the horse was to them a sign of the god's will.

Now, Darius had a groom, a right cunning fellow, whose name was Cebares. When Darius



## 62 Stories from Greek History

told him how they had agreed that he whose horse neighed first should be king. Ebares answered: "Be of good cheer, master! If that be all, thou shalt be king, and no other. I have a charm to bring it to pass." And this is what Ebares did: very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, he went to the stable where Darius kept his horse, and brought forth a certain hound, which slept in the same stall with the charger, and horse and dog were fast friends. Then Ebares went to the place where he knew the Persians were to meet, and stood ready in hiding. And when he saw that the Persians were assembled, and the sun began to send his first rays across the plain, he loosed the dog, who ran barking and leaping to join his friend. As soon as the horse saw the dog bounding towards him he lifted up his head, and neighed loud and shrill. Thereupon the other Persians, suspecting nothing, sprang from their horses, and bowed down before Darius, and cried with one voice: "Hail, Darius, King of the Persians!"

## Of the Greek Physician who healed Darius

**M**ANY are the evils of Oriental tyranny, but it has also something of good. The king's anger knew no limit against those who had offended him. On these he dealt out stripes, mutilation, torture, and death with unsparing hand. But as his vengeance was without bounds, so also was his gratitude. No one had to complain that he had served the king without reward. The names of all such as had done him any service were registered in a book, called the Book of the King's Benefactors.

Let us give one example of this before we begin our story of the Greek physician's adventures. When Darius was serving in Egypt under Cambyses he met one day walking in the streets of Memphis a certain Greek named Syloson, brother of Polycrates, who had been banished from Samos. Syloson was wearing a flame-coloured cloak, which caught the eye of Darius, and pleased him greatly. When he saw Darius casting longing eyes on the cloak he took it off, and gave it to him, refusing all payment. Afterwards he repented of his good nature, but when he heard how Darius had risen from a humble station to be lord of Asia he went up to Sousa, and claimed

## 64 Stories from Greek History

his reward, and the lavish bounty of the king recompensed the cloak-giver by making him ruler of the fair island of Samos.

And now the golden shower fell on Democedes, also a Greek, and native of Croton, in Southern Italy. Many and strange were the chances through which this man had passed. Driven by the harsh temper of his father from his native Croton, he went to Ægina, where he quickly surpassed all the physicians of the place, though he was unprovided with any implements of his art. The lavish offers of Polycrates tempted him to Samos. After the murder of Polycrates, whom he had accompanied on his fatal voyage, he remained a captive in the court of Oroetes. That treacherous satrap in his turn fell a victim to the just vengeance of Darius after many acts of treason and rebellion. All his slaves were carried up to Sousa, and with them went Democedes.

Just at this time it so fell out that Darius, in leaping from his horse, put his ankle out of joint. The injury being very severe he called in the Egyptian physicians, then reputed the first in the world. And they made themselves very hot, tugging and wrenching at the foot, but only made matters worse. Seven days and seven nights the king lay sleepless and in agony. Then one who had heard of the name of Democedes while he was still in Sardis spoke of him to Darius, and Darius said: "Bring him to me with all speed." They found the great physician chained among the slaves, and in rags, and brought him as he

was into the king's chamber. At first he denied all knowledge of his art, fearing that if he revealed himself he would never return to his country, but when they showed him the whips and the goads he confessed that he had some slight skill in healing. Darius commanded him to try his skill, and he by applying Greek remedies, and dealing gently with the tortured limb, gave instant relief. Darius fell into a placid sleep, and before long he was completely healed.

Democedes was rewarded with two pairs of golden fetters. Not liking such an emblem of gilded bondage, he asked Darius if he wished to double his woes in return for the cure. The king admired his spirit, and sent him to the harem. And the servants brought him, and showed him to the king's wives, saying: "Behold the man who has saved our king." Then the women took each a goblet, and dipped it into a great coffer filled with gold, and rained such a shower of gold on Democedes that his servant grew quite rich by picking up the pieces which fell on the floor. Nor did the bounty of the monarch stop here. A great house was set apart for the use of Democedes, and a long train of attendants ministered to all his needs. He ate at the same table with the king, and lived in the full sunshine of royal favour. Nothing was too good for the man whom the king delighted to honour.

Yet there was one drop of bitterness in the golden and jewelled cup which was offered to his lips. He was a prisoner—he, the great physician,

## 66      Stories from Greek History

deep in all the lore of his age ; above all, a Greek, born in a free city, nursed in the bracing air of manly liberty. Every day he must see such sights of shame and woe as only Oriental tyranny affords, taking the savour out of his meat, and making him long to exchange this cumbrous pomp for freedom and a crust. Sometimes he was able to use his influence with Darius to save some victim of his tyranny. Thus when the Egyptian physicians who had attended the king before he came were condemned to be impaled on sharp stakes he made intercession for them, and saved their lives. Once again he had the peculiar pleasure of rescuing from bondage a countryman of his own, a Greek prophet of Elis, whom he found pining in wretchedness among the prisoners brought up from Sardis. Yet still his heart yearned for liberty, and he sought opportunity of return to Greece.

Not long after it happened that Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, and wife of Darius, fell ill of a painful disorder. For some time she strove to hide it, being ashamed. But when it grew worse she sent for Democedes ; and he promised to heal her, having first made her swear that she would do him a favour, on condition that he asked nothing which she might not grant in all honour.

When the queen was healed he began to school her to his purpose, saying : " Thus and thus shalt thou say unto Darius." And she, having learnt her lesson from the Greek, began one night, when she was alone with the king, and spake to him

after this manner : " O king, having such power as thou hast, dost thou sit still, and seekest thou not to enlarge the borders of thy kingdom ? 'Tis meet that thou, who art young, and lord of a mighty power, shouldst do some glorious deed, that the Persians may know that they are ruled by a man. While thou art young, now is the time to act ; for soon old age shall be upon thee, and palsy thy hand and dull thy wit."

So said the queen, playing her part for him of Croton. And thus answered the king : " Wife, thou hast uttered all my purpose. For I am resolved to join Europe to Asia by a bridge, and march against the Scythians ; and soon all things will be ready." " Look you now," said Atossa, " leave marching against the Scythians for this present, and go rather against Greece. I am minded to have women of Sparta and Athens and Corinth and Argos for handmaidens. And there is one who can tell thee best of all that thou wouldst learn about Greece—even he who healed thy foot." Then said Darius : " Wife, since thou wouldst have me first make trial of Greece, methinks it is better first to send spies to spy out the land, that they may see and learn, and report all things unto us. And with them we will send him whom thou hast named. Then when I know all I will turn my hand against the Greeks."

It was no sooner said than done. At first dawn of day Darius sent for fifteen trusty men, and bade them go with Democedes and visit all the Greek cities on the coasts of Europe. " But see

## 68      Stories from Greek History

that he escape not, and take heed that ye bring him back safe to me. Then he called Democedes, and told him all that he would have him do, beseeching him, when he had shown the Persians all the coasts of Greece, to come back to Persia. "Take all that thou hast," said the king, "and carry it with thee as a gift to thy father and thy brethren, and when thou returnest I will give thee as much again. And I will command a great galleon to be laden with all good things, and send it with thee." Now, perhaps, Democedes felt some shame, knowing what he purposed, and hearing the king's noble offers; perhaps he feared that Darius meant to prove him; so he answered that he would not take all with him, but would leave what he had in Persia behind, but the galleon he would take as a gift to his brethren.

Then the fifteen Persians took Democedes, and went down with him to the great city of Sidon, on the coasts of Phoenicia. And straightway they manned two triremes—great galleys with two banks of oars on each side—and freighted a galleon with things rich and rare. When all was ready they put out to sea, and visited all the chief towns on the coast, and whatever they saw they wrote it down in a book for the king to read.

And they came to Tarentum, a Greek city at the head of the great gulf in the south of Italy. Now, the King of Tarentum was a friend of Democedes, so he seized the Persians out of their ships, and shut them up in prison; then he took the rudders from the ships, and hid them away. Once

more a free man, Democedes made haste, and went to his native city, Croton. As soon as he was departed the King of Tarentum released the Persians, and gave them back their rudders. They thought of Darius, and, trembling for their heads, went to take Democedes. When they came to Croton they found him in the market-place, and laid hands upon him. Democedes cried to the citizens to bring a rescue. Then some, fearing the power of Persia, would have given him up; but others ran to his aid, and beat the Persians with their staves. The Persians raised a clamour, and cried: "Men of Croton, ye know not what ye do! This man is a runaway, a slave of Darius the king. Think ye that if ye save him by violence the king will suffer it? Take heed to yourselves that ye provoke not his anger, lest he come with power, and destroy your city, and lay his yoke upon your necks." The citizens paid no heed to their words, but held fast to Democedes, and drove the Persians from the market-place; and some of them went down to the harbour, and seized the galleon with all her costly freight.

Then the Persians fled to their galleys, and prepared to sail away. And while they were making ready Democedes sent them a message to carry to their king. There was in the city of Croton a certain Milo, a man exceeding mighty, and a great wrestler, of whom many wonderful tales are told. The fame of Milo filled all Greece, and had reached even to the ears of Darius. The daughter of this Milo was betrothed to Democedes, so he



## 70 Stories from Greek History

bade the Persians tell their master that Democedes was preparing to wed Milo's daughter, to the end that Darius might know that he was a man of no mean note in his native land.

On their voyage home the Persians were wrecked, and returned at last, stripped of all they had, to Persia. And thus it came to pass that Democedes escaped from his splendid bondage, and lived as a Greek, and a free man, once more.

## The Devotion of Zopyrus

**T**HE last story shows you how the Greeks loved their liberty, and thought every luxury dearly bought at the price of servitude. You have now to hear to what lengths the Persians went in the service of their king; for this was the highest motive which a Persian knew. The king was to him as a god, and devotion to him in everything the highest virtue of a subject. You may have heard, perhaps, of the Divine Right of Kings, a doctrine which was preached by the clergy to the people of England under the Stuarts—such ideas were brought to Europe from the East, which is the true home of despotism.

The act of devotion which we have to relate occurred on the occasion of the revolt of Babylon, not many years after the escape of Democedes. The Babylonians had been making preparations during all the time of confusion from the conspiracy of the Magi to the accession of Darius. When all was ready each man chose one woman to manage his house, and make bread for him; then they collected all the other women, excepting their mothers, and smothered them; for they wished to have no useless mouths during the siege.

## 72 Stories from Greek History

Having done this, they closed their gates, and bade defiance to the Persian.

Darius assembled all his army, and marched against Babylon. But the Babylonians recked naught of him and all his host. They stood on the battlements, and danced in sight of the Persians, and derided them; and thus spake one of the merry men of Babylon: "Why sit ye there, men of Persia? Why go ye not home? Then shall ye take us, when mules bear young!" This he said as a thing impossible, for the mule bears no offspring.

A year and seven months the king lay before Babylon, trying by all means to take it. He drained off the Euphrates, as Cyrus had done, and would have entered by the river-bed; but the Babylonians were on their guard, and all his labour was in vain. In the twentieth month a strange thing befell a certain Zopyrus, son of Megabyzus, one of those seven who had slain the false Smerdis. One of the baggage-mules of this Zopyrus brought forth young. When this was told to Zopyrus he would not believe it till he went and saw with his own eyes the mother with her young. Then he bade his servants tell no man that thing; and he himself sat down to think. Remembering what the Babylonian had said—that Babylon should fall when mules bare young—he thought that this was surely a sign from Heaven that the city was doomed. So he went to Darius, and asked him if he desired with great desire that Babylon should be taken. When

## The Devotion of Zopyrus 73

Darius answered : " Ay ; with an exceeding great desire," Zopyrus went away, and considered deeply how he himself might accomplish this deed. Then he made a desperate resolve : he determined to go as a deserter into Babylon, and betray the town to the Persians. And that he might the better win belief for his tale he cut off his nose and his ears, tore out his hair by handfuls, and scourged himself until he was covered with cruel stripes. In this evil plight he went and showed himself to Darius. At that hideous sight Darius leapt from his throne, and cried aloud, and asked who had used his servant thus, and for what cause ? Zopyrus answered : " Thou and thou alone, O king, hast done this ; none other had power to bring me to this state. Thine was the will, mine the hand that wrought it, for I thought foul scorn that the Persians should be mirth and laughter to Assyrians." " Wretched man ! " cried Darius, " why givest thou fair names to foul deeds, saying that thou hast done thyself desperate harm because of the besieged ? Thou fool, thinkest thou that they will yield through fear of thy hideous face ? Art thou mad that thou hast made thyself horrible to behold ? " " Had I told thee," replied Zopyrus, " what I meant to do thou wouldst have forbidden it. Therefore I did it without leave asked of thee. And now, if thou wilt do thy part, Babylon is ours. I am going to the wall, even as thou seest me, and I shall say that it is thou who treated me thus. Doubtless, they will believe my tale, and give

## 74 Stories from Greek History

me a force. And do thou, ten days after I enter the wall, choose a thousand men, such as are of least account, and set them before the gates called of Semiramis. Seven days after that set me two thousand more before the gates called of Ninus. And again let other twenty days pass, and then bring yet four thousand, and place them before the Chaldæan gates. Let all these be armed only with daggers. And when thou hast done this, immediately command all thy host to advance in a general assault; but set me the Persians before the gates of Baal and the Cissian. For I believe that I shall win the Babylonians to put such trust in me that they will give all things into my power—yea, even the keys of the gates. The rest lies with thee and with thy Persians.”

So saying, he fled to the city, turning his head from time to time, as one who feared pursuit. When those on the wall saw him coming they ran down, and opened one wing of the gate a little, and, holding it thus, cried: “Who art thou, and what seekest thou?” “I am Zopyrus,” was the answer, “flying to Babylon from the wrath of Darius.” Then the keepers of the gates brought him in, and led him before the assembly. And Zopyrus stood before them, and told them how he had been foully entreated at the hands of Darius, because he had advised the king to raise the siege, and leave Babylon. “Therefore,” said he, “am I come to curse him and bless you. It shall not be for naught that he

## The Devotion of Zopyrus 75

has done me this foul wrong. I know all his plans and all his wiles." When the Babylonians saw one of the noblest of the Persians so horribly disfigured—nose and ears cut off, and garments bloody with scourging—they believed all his words, and were ready to give him anything he asked. Accordingly, he received command of a force; and on the tenth day he made a sally, and cut to pieces those thousand whom Darius, following his direction, had sent. A week after he did the same to the two thousand. Great was now the fame of Zopyrus in Babylon: all were singing the praises of Zopyrus. And when the appointed time came round, and he surrounded and cut to pieces the four thousand, Zopyrus had won his game. He was all in all to the Babylonians, and they made him their general and keeper of the walls.

And now the hour was come, and the great assault began. While the Babylonians ran to their posts Zopyrus stole softly to the gates, and opened them to the Persians. After a brief resistance Babylon was taken for the second time. When he was master of the city Darius plucked up the gates, and pulled down the walls, which had been left standing by Cyrus. Three thousand men, leaders of the rebellion, he impaled on sharp stakes; the rest of the Babylonians he let dwell in their city. And that the place might be peopled he commanded the neighbouring nations to send each a certain number of women, fifty thousand in all. These took the place of the women whom

## 76      Stories from Greek History

the Babylonians had smothered at the beginning of the revolt.

Then his thoughts turned sadly to Zopyrus, who had done him such signal service at such dire cost to himself. A deed like his could never be surpassed by a Persian, either of those who came after him or of those who lived before him, save only Cyrus, for with him none might compare. And Darius was wont to say that he would rather have Zopyrus unmaimed and unmarred than twenty Babylons. As far as honour could recompense him for such losses he was richly repaid. He was made Lord of Babylon for life, paying no tax to the king, and every year Darius sent him such gifts as only the worthiest receive.

So ends the tale of that strange passion of loyalty.

## How Darius made War on Scythia

**T**HE most gifted people of those days were the Greeks. From their books we learn most of what we know of the world of that time. And a very small world it was compared with the world as we know it now. Besides their own country they knew something of Italy, Sicily, and all the coasts of the Mediterranean as far as the Pillars of Hercules, which was their name for the Strait of Gibraltar. Greek cities lined all the coasts of the Black Sea, and all that part of Western Asia which faces towards Greece. They held Cyprus, and built the great city of Cyrene, on the northern coast of Africa, some distance from the western mouth of the Nile. Egypt they had also visited, and devoured with eager appetite all that they heard from her priests concerning that wondrous land. They knew also much of Asia as far as the eastern borders of Persia.

Thus the world of those days was a little oasis in the midst of a desert of terror and wonder. And the people of that little oasis were like clever children, telling each other stories of the Great Unknown around them. They told of the vast River Oceanus, which sweeps round the whole



## 78 Stories from Greek History

earth, encompassing it like the outer rim of a shield ; of the Great Lone Land, where all the air is thick with falling feathers, and a race of one-eyed men, called the Arimaspians, do ceaseless battle with flying dragons for a mighty hoard of gold ; of pigmies, a tiny folk living on the banks of the Oceanus, whose deadly foes are the cranes ; of human monsters in Africa whose heads grow beneath their shoulders. Their poets sang sweet songs of the Islands of the Blest—a beautiful land in the western sea, where dwell the departed spirits of the just ; and of a happy race beyond the North, whose life is all joy, without disease, without toil or want or care, who spend all their days in dance and song, hymning glad hymns to Apollo.

But between the known and the unknown there is always a borderland, half truth, half fable. And to this borderland belong the Scythians, as described by the Greeks. They were a vast race, swaying to and fro, like a great human tide, over all the wide plains of Russian and Northern Asia. That part of them of which we have to speak dwelt on the northern shores of the Black Sea. They were nomads—that is to say, they did not till the ground, but roamed up and down, stopping wherever they found pasture for their flocks and herds. They lived in cabins of plaited osiers mounted on wheels, like gipsy caravans. They were, therefore, hardy and simple in their ways, skilful bowmen, and strongly attached to their wild, free life.



## Greek Horsemen

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Against this roving people Darius now resolved to turn his arms; for the tyrant who would have peace at home must keep the minds of his subjects busy with wars and rumours of wars. And the Persians had more than one old score to pay. Long ago, while the Medes still bore rule in Asia, the Scythians had invaded the lands now ruled by Darius, and held them as conquerors for many years. Moved by all these reasons, Darius commanded his forces to assemble, and gave orders to throw a bridge over the Bosphorus. When all was ready he set out from Sousa. As he was on the point of departing one of his nobles, named *Æobazus*, asked that one of his three sons, all serving in the army, might be left behind. Darius smiled, and said: "I will leave them all." Loud was *Æobazus* in his thanks; but his joy was soon turned to woe. Darius gave the order, and his servants killed the three sons of *Æobazus*, and brought them all to their father dead.

After this act of royal bounty the king left Sousa, and marched to the Bosphorus. There he found a wondrous bridge all ready for his army, built by a Greek of Samos. And he set up two pillars of stone, graven with the names of all the peoples whom he ruled, and all the hosts which he led. The number of his army was seven hundred thousand horse and foot, and of his fleet six hundred ships. The king was pleased with the bridge, and gave splendid presents to the Greek who built it; and he in gratitude made paint a grand picture, in which Darius was seen sitting on

## 80 Stories from Greek History

a great throne, and all his army crossing the Bosphorus before his eyes. Then Darius gave command to the Greek captains of the fleet to sail into the Black Sea till they came to the mouth of the Danube, and there bridge the river, and wait for his coming. He himself, having crossed the Bosphorus, marched eastward until he came to the sources of the River Tearus. Thirty and eight are the springs, gushing from one rock, some hot, some cold ; and the waters have a healing virtue. And Tearus found favour in the king's eyes, and Darius set up a pillar, bearing these words : " Noblest and best of all waters are the waters of the springs of Tearus ; and to them came, leading an army against Scythia, the noblest and best of all men, Darius, son of Hystaspes, Lord of the Persians, and of all Asia." And he came to another river, called Artiscus. Here he pointed out a place, and bade every man in his army take a stone and cast it there. And they did so, and cast each man his stone, until the stones became a heap, and the heap grew to a great hill ; and they left the hill, and marched on.

All the tribes of Thrace, the land through which he was marching, made submission to Darius—all save one, the Getæ, the bravest and most just of all. These Getæ believe themselves immortal : their souls perish not with their bodies, but go to join their god Zalmoxis, whom others call Geleleizis. Every five years they draw lots, and send a messenger to Zalmoxis, with charge to tell the

god all they need. And this is how they send him : some of them stand ready, having each man three spears, while others take the messenger by his hands and feet, and swinging him, hurl him on the points of the spears. If he is pierced in a mortal part, and dies well, they say that the god is pleased ; but if he dies not they call him a bad man, and send another. When it thunders and lightens these Getæ shoot arrows towards heaven, with loud cries and threats ; for they believe that there is no true god but their own. And now this strange people was defeated by Darius, and followed his army.

After he had conquered the Getæ, Darius came to the Danube, where the bridge was built, two days' sail from its mouth. Then he took a thong of leather, and made in it sixty knots, and calling the Greek princes who had command of the fleet he said to them : " Men of Ionia, take ye this thong, and do according to my words : from the day when ye see me set forth against the Scythians loose ye each day a knot, and if I be not returned when the days of the knots are gone by go ye unto your own country. But till that day come guard ye the bridge, and take heed that ye keep it safe and sound."

And what were the Scythians doing while this great host was moving against them ? Alone they were unable to stand against Darius, so they sent messengers to the neighbouring tribes, and eight kings met together in council. There was the King of the Tauri, who dwelt in what we

## 82 Stories from Greek History

call the Crimea, and sacrificed all who were wrecked on their coasts to their goddess Iphigenia; a warlike people, whose houses were adorned with the heads of slaughtered foes. With him came the King of the Agathyrsi, who live delicately, and wear ornaments of gold; of the wizard Neuri, every man of whom changes once a year into a wolf, and then back into a man again; of the Androphagi, who know no laws, and eat human flesh; and of the Black Cloaks, so named from the colour of their garments. There sat the King of the Budini, a mighty tribe, known by their fierce blue eyes and red hair. Last came the Kings, of the Geloni—who, unlike the Scythians, till the soil and keep gardens; and of the fierce Sauromatæ, whose women go into battle with the men, for they are descended from the Amazons, the warrior-women of Asia.

When the kings had heard the words of the Scythians, warning them of the common danger, they took counsel together; and their opinions were divided. Three of them wished to help the Scythians, five were for leaving them to help themselves. "If," said these five, "ye had not wronged the Persians, reason were that we should make common cause with you; but seeing that ye invaded their land, and held it as long as God willed, now are ye suffering for your own sins, and we have neither part nor lot in the matter."

So the Scythians had to be content with the help of the three kings. They resolved, therefore, not to do battle with the Persians, but to divide

their forces, and hover round their march, laying waste all the land through which they had to pass. Their wives and children they sent away in caravans, telling them to drive always towards the north. Then they made two divisions of their army, one twice as large as the other, and sent out swift horsemen to watch the movements of the Persians.

When the Persians saw the Scythian outriders they gave chase, and these led them on, until they fell in first with the smaller division of the Scythians. They crossed the Tanais, which we call the Don, and came to a great town of the Budini—the red-haired nation—built all of wood, which they burnt. Then on they went, until they reached the borders of a great desert, the Scythians always following. Here Darius paused, and began to build a fortified camp. At night the Persians rested from their labour; in the morning they rose, and looked, and lo! the Scythians were gone. They had vanished in the night, and gone to join the main army. So he, thinking that these were the whole Scythian nation, left building the camp, and followed their tracks westward. Presently he fell in with the whole army of the Scythians, the two divisions having united; and they fled, and he gave chase again. Now, the Scythians had promised to visit the five kings who had refused to help them; and they remembered their promise, and led the Persians into the lands of those five kings, and the kings fled in dismay, leaving their fields to the invader.



## 84 Stories from Greek History

After many days the Scythians turned again, and led the Persians back towards their own land. Long and weary grew the chase, and there seemed no end. So then Darius sent a horseman to Idanthysrus, King of the Scythians, to bear this message: "What possesses thee, O king, that thou fliest from me ever thus? If thou thinkest thyself able to resist my power stand and do battle; if thou knowest thyself weaker cease from thy flight, and send earth and water to thy master."

Idanthysrus answered: "Thus stands the matter, O king: I have never fled any man in fear, nor do I flee from thee now; we are but changing out pastures, as is our wont. Cities have we none, nor farms, for thee to spoil. But if thou art fain to see us fight then go seek the tombs of our fathers, and lay hands on them—then shalt thou see whether we can fight or no. I know not any master save the gods of my fathers. Instead of earth and water, I will send thee such gifts as beseem thee. And for that thou callest thyself my master, I give thee leave to hang thyself."

When the other Scythians heard the demands of Darius they were full of anger, and resolved no longer to retire before the Persians, but to cut them off piecemeal as they went out after forage. So they kept falling on parties of the Persian horse, and drove them to take refuge with the infantry. In these encounters the Persians found strange allies—none other than the asses and

mules in their camp. For Scythia knows no such beasts, and the Scythian horses had never seen such forms, or heard such music as the asses' braying. Many times, when a cloud of Scythian cavalry was seen sweeping down on the camp, it would suddenly stop dead, the horses snorting, pricking up their ears, and refusing to stir when they saw their fair half-brothers, and heard the voice of their cousins. But in spite of such help the Persians were in an evil plight. The Scythians began to fool them, making as though they would invite them to prolong their stay ; for they would leave small flocks and herds unguarded, and the Persians came and carried off the beasts, and were much lifted up in spirit by that booty.

Then Darius began to be sore perplexed, and the Scythian chiefs, learning this, sent him wherewith to clear his wits : they sent him a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. He who brought them was asked what was the meaning of these gifts. He answered : " If ye are wise ye will discover what they mean." Darius thought, in his pride, that the Scythians meant to make submission, arguing thus : the mouse signifies earth, the frog water—and to give earth and water was the common sign of submission to an invader. The bird, he said, resembles the horse in speed—that stands for the Persian horsemen ; and by giving up their arrows they mean that they would surrender their weapons. But Gobryas, one of the seven who had slain Smerdis, was wiser : " This," said he, " is the meaning of the gifts :

## 86      Stories from Greek History

*Except ye become birds, and fly up into the heavens, O ye Persians, or become mice, and burrow into the ground, or become frogs, and leap into the waters, ye shall not return from our land, but shall all be shot down by these arrows."*

The Scythians now prepared for a general assault. While they were waiting, with horse and foot, to do battle with the Persians it chanced that a hare was seen running between the two armies, and those of the Scythians who saw it left their ranks, and gave chase to the hare, with wild cries and savage glee. Darius inquired the cause of the commotion, and, being informed, he said: "Methinks we are but mirth and laughter to these Scythians, and I fear me that Gobryas interpreted the gifts aright. Now, therefore, there is need of good counsel to show us how we may escape hence." Then by the advice of Gobryas he did as follows:—pretending that he was going to make a great assault on the Scythians he left the sick and the weaker sort and all the asses in camp, while he himself, with all the rest of his host, set out at dead of night for the Danube. When the asses found themselves left in the almost empty camp they set up a tremendous braying, and the Scythians, hearing it, thought that the Persians were still there. In the morning those who had been left by Darius, finding themselves betrayed, held out their hands to the Scythians, and submitted. Learning from the prisoners what Darius had done, the Scythians made after him in hot pursuit.

Meanwhile the Greeks who had been left to guard the bridge over the Danube had begun to wonder what was become of their master. The sixty days were long gone by, and yet no sign was seen of the Persians. They began to weary of their charge. Roving bands of Scythians had ridden down from time to time to the river, and brought them tidings of the Persians' evil plight. Just when they had determined to abandon the bridge they saw signs that a great force was approaching. It was the Scythians, who, unencumbered by baggage, and knowing the country, had outstripped Darius, and arrived at the Danube before him. Down poured the wild horsemen, and, standing on the river's brink, cried to the Greeks in their ships: "Men of Ionia, the tale of the days is past, and ye do ill to remain here longer. If ye do this in fear, fear ye no more, but break down the way over the waters, and depart, giving thanks to God and the Scythians. But we will so deal with him who was your master that he shall never again lead an army against any."

Then the princes of the Greeks took counsel together, and one of them, Miltiades, who ruled in Chersonesus, on the northern shore of the Dardanelles or Hellespont, was for following the advice of the Scythians. But Histiaëus, Prince of Miletus, spoke against this. "That we bear rule," said Histiaëus, "in our cities we owe to the countenance of Darius. But if he perish then will the people of our cities pull us down,

## 88 Stories from Greek History

and rule themselves." And his words seemed wise to the other princes. But if they refused the demand of the Scythians outright there was danger that these would come and break down the bridge themselves. So they agreed to destroy the bridge to the length of a bowshot from the shore, and to give the Scythians fair words, promising to do all that they wished. The Scythians believed them, and went off to find Darius. But they went on a false scent, thinking that the Persians would turn aside from their former line of route, which was denuded of all sustenance, to find fodder and water. The Persians, however, marched on their former tracks, and thus escaped a second time.

Stripped of half his men, weary, famished, and sorely cast down in spirit, the Great King plods heavily with the wreck of his army through the waste. Night has fallen, when suddenly a gleam as of water is seen on the horizon. Then a cry is heard, and is caught up by many voices: "The Danube! The Danube!" The fugitives take heart again at that welcome sound, and halt at last on the river-brink. They peer into the murky depth; they hear the waters gurgle by. Horrible sight!—the bridge is gone! It was a fearful moment: the Persians seemed lost—abandoned to famine and the shafts of the Scythians. But Darius had still one hope. There was in the Persian army an Egyptian, famed for his mighty voice; him Darius bade stand on the bank, and call aloud to

## How Darius made War 89

Histiæus of Miletus. So the Egyptian stood, and called; and Histiæus heard, and, bringing up his ships, filled the gap in the bridge, and Darius with his army passed over safe to the other side.

## Cypselus of Corinth and Periander his Son

**T**HERE was a time, in the seventh and sixth centuries before Christ, when most of the principal Greek cities fell under the rule of Tyrants. The Greeks called every man a Tyrant who set himself above the laws and ruled by force, though he might otherwise be a great and wise prince. Thus Cromwell was a tyrant, in the Greek sense. We have heard of Polycrates, Tyrant of Samos, and we shall hear presently of Pisistratus and his sons at Athens. But we had better begin with the Tyrants of Corinth, as these come first in time.

When Hippias, son of Pisistratus, was driven out of Athens he turned to Sparta for aid. The Spartans had their own reasons for wishing to restore him. They summoned their allies, and asked for their help in bringing back Hippias. Then the other allies were silent; for, though they liked not the words of the Spartans, they feared to offend them. But Sosicles of Corinth sprang from his seat, and broke out in a torrent of indignation. "Surely," he cried, "heaven and earth shall be turned upside down, and men shall henceforth dwell in the waters, and fish on dry land, seeing that you men of Sparta are seeking to

bring back into a free city that cruel and blood-thirsty monster, a tyrant." Then he went on to tell what Corinth had endured in the days of the Tyrants.

The story, as told by Sosicles, takes us back to the time when Corinth was ruled by a powerful clan, who called themselves the Sons of Bacchis. They kept to themselves, and neither married nor gave in marriage outside their own clan. But it chanced that Amphion, one of the Sons of Bacchis, had a lame daughter, nicknamed Labda from her deformity.\* None of her own clan would marry her, and she was given in marriage to Eëtion, a man of the people. Labda was childless, so her husband went to Delphi, to inquire concerning his hopes of issue. As soon as he set foot on the threshold the priestess addressed him thus :

"Eëtion, full of honour thou art, though no one  
regards thee!  
Labda shall bear thee a son, and on the rulers  
of Corinth  
Heavily falls that rock, and brings her people to  
judgment."

Now, the Sons of Bacchis had long ago received a dark oracle to this effect :

"In her lofty nest an eagle † hatched a lion for  
her brood,  
Mighty lion, lord of havoc, ravening for the  
people's blood !

\* Labda = Lambda, the Greek L, so that the name means bandy-legged.

† Greek *Aëtos* ; a punning allusion to the name Eëtion.



## 92 Stories from Greek History

Then beware, whoever dwelleth where Peirene's \*  
waters flow,  
And the lofty hill of Corinth frowns upon the  
flood below."

Compared with one another, the two oracles seemed to strike out a light. So the Sons of Bacchis waited, and as soon as Labda's son was born they sent ten of their number to kill him. And they went, and entered the house of Eetion, who was absent at the time. Labda, who had no suspicion of their purpose, greeted them kindly, thinking that they had come in friendship to her husband. After they had talked a while she went and fetched her child, and handed it to one of the men. Now, they had agreed that the first who took the child should dash it on the stones. But God so ordained it that, as the man received the babe, it stretched out its little arms to him, and smiled in his face. And the man's fierce spirit was touched, and he could not find it in his heart to slay that sweet innocent; so he handed the infant to one of his fellows, and he to a third, until at last the little one had made the round of the whole ten, and ten times escaped death. Then the men went out, and stood by the doors, upbraiding one another for their weakness. Above all, they were wroth with him who had first taken the child, and given, as it were, the signal for mercy. At last they resolved to enter the house again, and do the deed together. But while they had been disputing Labda was standing behind

\* A spring in Corinth.



"She caught up the Child, and hid it in a Chest "



the door, and heard all their words. Full of terror, she ran and caught up the child, and hid it in a chest. The men came in, and sought through the house for the young Cypselus \*; but I believe that they were not over-eager to find him. What were the mother's feelings as she saw these human bloodhounds on the track of her child! But at length her cruel anguish was past—they went, and she breathed again. As for the ten, they returned to those who had sent them on that errand, and said: "All is done, even as ye wished."

When Cypselus was grown to manhood he received this oracle while on a visit to Delphi:

"Blest is the man who treads this holy ground,  
Eetion's son, of Corinth king renowned:  
He and his son shall reign: but with the last  
The kingly honour of their house is past."

Encouraged thus by the god, Cypselus set himself to work out the fulfilment of the prophecy. By what means he made himself master of Corinth we are not informed; but from what we know of other men of his class we may suppose that he made common cause with the people, and headed an insurrection against the nobles, whose rule was harsh and oppressive. When he became Tyrant he used his power without scruple, dealing out banishment, confiscation, and death on all who displeased him. He reigned thirty years, and died in full possession of his power.

Of Periander his son, who succeeded him, we

\* Greek for "a chest"; so named from this adventure.

## 94      Stories from Greek History

know much more. At first he was gentle in his dealings, but after the evil advice of Thrasybulus, Tyrant of Miletus, he became another man. Cypselus had chastised the Corinthians with whips, but Periander now chastised them with scorpions.

For Periander had sent a messenger to Thrasybulus to ask this question: "What is the best and safest manner of ruling a city?" On hearing the question the Prince of Miletus led the messenger to a fair cornfield outside the town, and as they passed through the cornfield he made the messenger repeat again and again the question of Periander; meanwhile, whenever he saw an ear of corn larger and taller than the rest, he struck it off with his stick. Then he sent the messenger away without adding a word. When the messenger returned to Corinth, Periander asked what Thrasybulus had said. And the man answered: "Nay, master, I wonder that thou sentest me to such a madman as that. He gave me no word of advice, but while we talked I saw him with his own hand destroy the choicest ears in a whole field of corn." Periander made him describe exactly what he had seen, and when he had heard all he understood that Thrasybulus meant him to cut off the noblest and best of the citizens.

From that hour the tyranny wore a new face, and Periander lifted up his hand, and slew, and spared not. Nor was he more merciful in his own house. His wife, Melissa, daughter of Procles, who ruled as a Tyrant in the neighbouring city of Epidaurus, fell a victim to his murderous fury.

After her death Periander wished to be informed of the spot where a certain treasure was hidden. Information on such points was often sought in those days from the spirits of the departed, and there was a class of persons, called necromancers, who professed to be able to call up ghosts from the underworld. To some of these Periander applied, and when the ghost of Melissa appeared, the messengers asked concerning the money. But she would not answer ; for she said that she was cold and naked, because Periander had forgotten to burn her garments at her burial. When the Tyrant heard this he summoned all the women of Corinth to the Temple of Hera ; and they came, all in their best attire, thinking that it was a holiday. But Periander had stationed his guards at hand, and they rushed upon the women, and stripped them all, handmaiden and noble dame, and heaping their garments together, burnt them to furnish a ghostly wardrobe for the murdered Melissa. After this the poor spirit was appeased, and told Periander what he wanted to know.

But the murder was to breed new troubles for Periander. He had two sons, aged at this time eighteen and seventeen. After Melissa's death they went on a visit to Procles, Tyrant of Epidaurus, their mother's father. He received his daughter's children kindly, and as he was bidding them farewell, he said to them : " My boys, do ye know who killed your mother ? " The elder son took no notice of his words ; but the younger,

## 96      Stories from Greek History

whose name was Lycophron, was so struck to the heart that when he returned he would not speak to his father, nor answer him, and being asked the reason for his behaviour he turned sullenly away. At last Periander became angry, and turned him out of doors. Then he inquired of his other son what their uncle had said to them. He, being dull of wit, at first could not recall it ; but being pressed by his father, at last he remembered.

Periander was resolved not to give in to his younger son, so he made proclamation that whoever spoke to Lycophron, or received him into their houses, would have to pay a heavy fine. Thus the poor lad was cut off from food and shelter, wandering about the public places by day, and sleeping by night on the bare ground. In this state he was found by Periander after three days, unwashed, and sorely reduced by famine. Periander was moved, for Lycophron was his favourite, and he went up to him, and said : " Son, whether is better to fare as now thou art faring, or to give in to thy father, and to receive from his hands the sovereignty and all the good things which it gives ? Thou art my son, and a prince of wealthy Corinth, and thou hast chosen the life of a beggar to indulge thy stubborn anger against him whom thou oughtest first to obey. If aught untoward has befallen which makes thee suspect me, the burden is mine, since mine was the deed. Thou hast learnt now that it is better to be envied than to be pitied ; thou hast learnt the foolishness of nursing anger against thy father

and lord. Now get thee home." Lycophron's only answer was : " Go pay the fine ; thou hast transgressed thine own decree."

Then Periander, seeing that he was not to be appeased, sent him to Corcyra, now Corfu, which was a colony of Corinth, and part of his dominions. After Lycophron's departure the savage old man marched with an army against Epidaurus, captured the city, and took prisoner his father-in-law, whose words had set Lycophron against him. By-and-by he found himself too old to bear the burden of sovereignty, so he sent to Corcyra to summon his younger son home ; for the elder was an idiot, and useless. Lycophron did not so much as deign to answer the message. But Periander longed exceedingly for the lad, so he sent his daughter, thinking that she would prevail. And she came to her brother, and said : " Brother, wouldst thou rather have the crown pass to others, and thy father's house broken up, than come and hold them thyself ? Get thee home ; cease hurting thyself. Contention is a foolish thing. Heal not harm with harm. Sovereignty is a slippery possession, and many are lovers of it. He is an old man, and past his prime. Give not thy good things away to others." These and other wise saws the maiden repeated, having been taught them by her father, who was one of those called the Seven Wise Men of Greece. But Lycophron answered that as long as his father lived he would never return to Corinth. At last Periander proposed that Lycophron should come



## 98 Stories from Greek History

to Corinth as his successor, he himself offering to take his son's place in Corcyra. Lycophron agreed, but while he was preparing for his departure the Corcyreans, dreading to fall under the rule of the terrible Periander, seized Lycophron, and slew him.

Of the rest of the acts of Periander, and how he ended, we know nothing certain. But there is still something to tell. Like all the Tyrants, he was a great patron of poets; and among those who found welcome at his court was Arion, a famous harper and minstrel, who invented the Dithyramb, a wild and beautiful song in honour of Bacchus. Having stayed a long time in Corinth, Arion wished to visit the Greek cities of Italy and Sicily. So he went and gathered much wealth; and, desiring now to return to Corinth, he hired a ship, manned by Corinthian sailors, to convey him and his possessions back to Greece. The rich cargo which they were carrying for Arion tempted the greed of the mariners, and they determined to fling Arion into the sea, and take his goods. Arion guessed by their gloomy looks and whispered conference that they were plotting mischief, so he offered them all his goods if they would only spare his life. They would not agree to this, but ordered him either to make an end of himself in the ship, that he might find burial when they came to land, or else to leap forthwith into the sea. Then Arion, thus driven to extremity, besought them to suffer him to stand on the deck, arrayed in all his robes, and sing his last song—promising, after he had sung, to slay him-

self. To hear that prince of song chanting his own lays was no common delight even for these desperate men ; they drew back, therefore, into the waist of the vessel, leaving the tall deck of the poop to Arion. Then he put on all his singing robes, and took his harp, and, standing high above his murderers, chanted a wild and warlike strain, such as might have breathed new valour into the breasts of heroes, and when he had ended he leapt with his harp and all his robes into the sea. The ship continued her voyage to Corinth, the mariners supposing that they had seen the last of Arion. But the gods love a poet who honours them and sings their praises, so they sent a dolphin, an exceeding great and mighty fish, to Arion's aid, and he mounted on the dolphin's back, and rode that strange steed all the way to Tænarum, the southernmost cape of Greece. There he landed, went on foot to Corinth, and told all that had befallen. Periander thought that he was lying, and kept him in ward against the coming of the sailors. Presently the ship came in, and Periander asked the sailors what news they had to tell of Arion. They answered that they had left him hale and hearty in Italy, when lo ! to their amazement, Arion stood before them just as he was at the moment when he leaped into the sea. Utterly confounded by this wonderful resurrection, they confessed their guilt, and were led away to prison.

This is all that we know concerning the Tyrants of Corinth,

# Tales of Sparta

## I

### INTRODUCTORY

**O**N the banks of the Eurotas, beneath the towering peak of Taijgetus, lay Sparta, the most powerful city in that part of Greece which we call the Morea and the ancients called Peloponnesus. Unlike other cities, Sparta had no walls. Lying in a deep valley, she was so strongly defended by mountain barriers that walls were hardly needed, and if she wanted further defence she found it in the strong arms of her sons.

The earliest inhabitants of Southern Greece were the Achæans—the Greeks of whom Homer sang in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But in the beginning of the eighth century before Christ a hardy race of mountaineers, called the Dorians, came down from the North, and made themselves masters of all the chief cities in Greece, with the exception of Athens. You must not suppose that the Achæans gave up their lands and cities without a struggle. There was a long and bitter contest, and the chief division of the Dorians, who had made their headquarters at Sparta,

remained for many years in the position of an invading army on a hostile soil. To this fact is due the very peculiar character of Spartan manners and training. Sparta remained for centuries what she was at the first coming of the Dorians—not a city, but a camp. Spartan education had but one object—to make the sons of Sparta good soldiers. As soon as he was born the Spartan boy was placed on a shield, and his mother pronounced over him these words: “Either this, or on this”—that is, “Either bring back this shield from battle, or be brought back dead upon it”; for to throw away the shield was a confession of defeat. At an early age the boy was taken from his mother, and went through a course of the severest bodily training. If he were hungry he was bidden to go and hunt for his dinner on the mountains. Sometimes he would be publicly flogged at the altar of Diana; he might be beaten to death, but if one cry escaped his lips he was no true son of Sparta. You have all heard of the Spartan boy who was nursing a young fox under his cloak, and, rather than utter a word of complaint, allowed the fox to gnaw into his heart.

There were then three things aimed at in the Spartan training: strength, courage, and obedience. Nothing graceful or beautiful—neither poetry nor eloquence, art nor science—had any place in that iron system. The Spartan learnt the elements of music that he might march in time, and a few rude battle songs to raise his

## 102 Stories from Greek History

courage in the hour of peril. One object was kept in view, and one only, and it was certainly attained to a marvellous degree: the Spartans were probably the finest soldiers that the world has ever seen.

The Spartans were ruled by two kings, and they themselves explained this fact in the following manner:—when the Dorians first invaded Peloponnesus they were led by their king, Aristodemus, who was descended in a direct line from Hercules. At this moment twins were born to him; and soon after Aristodemus died. Then the Spartans, according to their custom, would have made the elder their king, but the twins were so much alike that they did not know which to choose. They asked the mother, but she could not, or would not, tell. The god of Delphi was now called in to solve the puzzle. He ordered them to make both the boys kings, but to honour the elder more. But still the question remained: Which *was* the elder? Then a cunning fellow, named Panites, a Messenian, gave them this shrewd counsel: "Watch the mother," said he, "and see which of the children she washes and feeds first. If it is always the same child you ~~may~~ be sure that he is the elder, but if she changes ~~from~~ one to the other 'tis plain that she knows no more than you, and then you must try some other way." So they watched, and found that the same child was always washed and fed first; then they knew that he was the elder. They took him, and named him Eurysthenes, and the

younger they called Procles. Now, the two were at strife with one another all their lives, and there was strife between the two kings of Sparta ever after.

The persons of the Spartan kings were sacred. They were the High Priests of the nation, and leaders in war. They were honoured, like Homer's princes, with the choicest portions of meat at public sacrifices and feasts. A hundred picked warriors were set apart for their bodyguard. They were the guardians of orphan maidens, and keepers of the public roads. When a king died horsemen were sent to carry the tidings through all the land of Sparta, and women went round the city beating brazen vessels, and making a hideous din. Then from every house two free citizens, a man and a woman, had to make show of mourning by rending their garments and sprinkling dust on their heads. When the time for the funeral came the whole population, free Spartans, subjects, and serfs, men and women, came in thousands, beating their heads, and lamenting with all their might, crying pitifully: "The last is the best! The last is the best!" If the king died in battle they made an image, laid it on a bier, in gorgeous array, and carried it out to burial. Then for ten days after no business was done, no magistrate gave judgment in his court, but all the people mourned.

I have spoken of Spartans, subjects, and serfs; I will now say something more of these three divisions of the Spartan commonwealth. The

## 104 Stories from Greek History

Spartans were the descendants of the original Dorian invaders, a proud military aristocracy, wholly devoted to the pursuits of war, despising commerce and money-making industry, and marrying only in their own class. As time went on they grew poorer and poorer, and dwindled steadily in number ; but in the period of which we are writing they were still at the height of their power. Next came those whom we have called the subjects, descended from the Achæans whom the Dorians had conquered. These paid tribute to the Spartans, occupied themselves with trade and agriculture, and often grew very rich. Last in order were the serfs, called by the Spartans Helots, whose ancestors had made the longest and most stubborn resistance to the Dorians. Their lot was most wretched : they tilled the soil, performed all the heaviest labour for their masters, and accompanied them, as did also the subjects, into battle. They were brave men, and as good Greeks as the Spartans themselves ; yet they had no rights, and were treated more like beasts than men. One example will show their degraded state : if a Spartan wished to teach his sons the folly of intemperance he sent for a Helot, made him very drunk, and then, pointing to that miserable object, bade his children take warning by the example. Yet the Spartans feared them, and used the most cruel means to keep down their numbers. Once they made proclamation that all Helots who thought they had served the State well should come forward, and claim their reward.

Two thousand of the Helots answered the summons. They were crowned with garlands, and marched in triumph to the temples of the gods. Then they vanished from sight—no man could say where or how. There is no doubt that they were foully murdered.



## 106 Stories from Greek History

### A BATTLE SONG OF TYRTÆUS

"How glorious fall the valiant, sword in hand,  
In front of battle for their native land !  
But oh ! what ills await the wretch that yields,  
A recreant outcast from his country's fields !  
The mother whom he loves shall quit her home,  
An aged father at his side shall roam ;  
His little ones shall weeping with him go,  
And a young wife participate his woe.

He shall not blush to leave a recreant's name,  
And children, like himself, inured to shame.  
But we will combat for our fathers' land,  
And we will drain the life-blood where we stand,  
To save our children.—Fight ye side by side,  
And serried close, ye men of youthful pride,  
Disdaining fear, and deeming light the cost  
Of life itself in glorious battle lost.

Leave not our sires to stem the unequal fight,  
Whose limbs are nerved no more with buoyant might ;  
Nor, lagging backward, let the younger breast  
Permit the man of age (a sight unblest)  
To welter in the combat's foremost thrust,  
His hoary head dishevelled in the dust,  
And venerable bosom bleeding bare.

But youth's fair form, though fallen, is ever fair,  
And beautiful in death the boy appears,  
The hero-boy, that dies in blooming years :  
In man's regret he lives, and woman's tears ;  
More sacred than in life, and lovelier far,  
For having perished in the front of war."

*Translated by* THOMAS CAMPBELL.

## II

## MESSENIAS, TEGEA, THYREA

**L**ONG after their settlement on the banks of the Eurotas the Spartans fought many fierce and bitter fights with their neighbours. West of Sparta lies Messenia, a fair and fertile land, with rich harvests of corn. The Spartans cast covetous eyes on the fat fields of Messenia, and soon arose a terrible war for the possession of that good land. Thirty years it lasted, and the Spartans, after many defeats, were growing weary of the struggle, when they were advised to ask aid of Athens. Now, the Athenians loved not the Spartans, so they sent them in mockery a lame schoolmaster to help them out. But this lame schoolmaster, named Tyrtæus, was a fine poet, and his brave battle songs so inspired the Spartans that they took heart again, went forth to do battle once more, and at last gained the mastery.

Having conquered Messenia, the Spartans turned their eyes northward to the wild and rugged land of Arcadia, the Switzerland of Greece, and the core of Peloponnesus. The Arcadians were a warlike race of hardy mountaineers, and here, too, the Spartans met with a stubborn resistance. First they sent, according to their wont, to ask counsel of the Delphic god ; and Apollo, who was a young god, and, like most young things, loved mischief, sent them this answer :

## 108 Stories from Greek History

"Too great a gift is Arcady : that boon I cannot  
give :

Her sons shall beat thy weapons back : on fruit  
of oaks they live.

Wouldst dance on Tegea's level meads ?

That honour shall be thine,

And all her broad and smiling plain to measure  
with a line."

The Spartans were highly elated by this oracle ; for Tegea is the chief city of Arcadia, and the oracle seemed to promise an easy victory. So they girded on their weapons, and went gaily to battle, carrying a huge burden of fetters to bind the sons of Tegea. But they soon learnt the true meaning of Apollo's words. They were defeated, and such as were taken captive had to wear the chains which they had brought for the Tegeans, and they measured with a line the fields which they were obliged to dig for their new masters.

About the time of Croesus the Spartans were encouraged to renew their attempts against the freedom of Tegea. After many defeats they received another message from Delphi, telling them that they would have better fortune if they brought to Sparta the bones of Orestes, son of Agamemnon. They made search for the tomb of Orestes, but could not find it. Again they made inquiry of the god as to where Orestes was buried. Then came the mysterious answer :

"A place there is on Tegea's plain,  
Where fettered winds reluctant roar ;  
Stroke falls on stroke, and bane on bane :  
There sleeps Orestes : ask no more."

As the god seemed to be growing tired of their repeated questioning the Spartans had to remain satisfied with his riddling message, though it left them no wiser than before. It fell to a certain Lichas, one of the five young Spartans who were appointed every year to busy themselves in the public service, to read the riddle. In a time of truce, when Spartans and Tegeans were passing to and fro between the rival cities, this Lichas happened to enter a blacksmith's forge on Tegean ground. The smith was just forging a piece of iron, and Lichas stood and wondered at his skill. Presently the smith paused from his work, and said, replying to the look on his visitor's face: "Ay, my Spartan friend, thou wouldst marvel still more if thou hadst seen what I have seen. I wished to dig a well in yonder court, and as I was digging I came upon a coffin ten feet long. Now, I did not believe that men had ever been greater in stature than they are to-day, so I opened the coffin, and found that it was none too large for him who was buried in it. Then, having measured the bones, I covered all up again." At these words of the smith the meaning of the oracle flashed upon Lichas: the "fettered winds" were in the blacksmith's bellows; the "stroke falling on stroke" was the shock of hammer and anvil; the "bane on bane" was the iron which the smith was forging—for iron is oftentimes a bane to men. Well pleased by his discovery, Lichas returned to Sparta, and told the magistrates what he had heard. They, to give a colour to his departure,

## 110 Stories from Greek History

pretended to banish him from Sparta. He went straightway as an exile to Tegea, and sought to hire the piece of land from the smith. Having persuaded the man with some difficulty he took possession of the spot, dug up the bones, and returned with them to Sparta. From that hour the Spartans continually got the better of the Tegeans, who finally submitted, but retained their liberty, and fought in a post of honour in the Spartan armies.

But the greed of Sparta was not yet satisfied. There is a strip of land, called Thyrea, running down the eastern coast of Peloponnesus to Cape Malea. The possession of this piece of land would make the Spartans masters of all Southern Peloponnesus, and accordingly they determined to annex it, though it really belonged to Argos. Now, the Argives hated the Spartans, whom they regarded as upstarts and intruders, remembering the ancient glories of Mycenæ and Tiryns, the home of Agamemnon and Hercules. So they came in force to drive the Spartans out of Thyrea, but instead of fighting a pitched battle they agreed that three hundred picked men from either army should fight the matter out. The two armies drew off, and the three hundred Argives and three hundred Spartans fell to work on one another. Long and bloody was the fray, and at last of all the six hundred only three were left—two Argives, and one Spartan named Othryades. The two Argives ran off to Argos to proclaim their victory ; but the Spartan remained on the field, spoiled

## Tales of Sparta

III

the bodies of the slain, and carried their armour to where the Spartans lay. Then he stood all night on the silent battlefield. Next day came the whole force of the Argives and Spartans to learn how their champions had fared. Then a great dispute arose, each side claiming the victory. The Argives said: "We have two men left, ye have only one." The Spartans answered: "Ay; but the two Argives fled, while our man kept his ground, and stripped the dead." From words they came to blows, and after many had fallen on both sides at last the Spartans gained the victory. After this the Argives made a law that their men should wear their hair cropped close, in sign of mourning, and their women wear no gold ornaments, until Thyrea was recovered. But the Spartans, who till then had been shorn, from that day let their hair grow.

One thing more we are told, which shows how stern was the Spartan's ideal of a soldier's honour. Othryades, the only one left of the Spartan three hundred, being ashamed to return to Sparta when all his comrades had fallen, slew himself upon the battlefield.

### III

#### THE STORY OF GLAUCUS

**H**EAR now of the awful doom which fell upon one who broke faith with a friend, and dared to tempt a god. There lived at Sparta in ancient days a certain Glaucus. He was

## 112 Stories from Greek History

rich in this world's goods, and was accounted the most righteous of all the Spartans of his time. But when the day was come which the gods had appointed for his trial there came to Sparta a man of Miletus, desiring to have speech of him. And the stranger stood before Glaucus, and said: "I am a man of Miletus, and I am come, Glaucus, wishing to have benefit of thy righteousness. Behold, the fame of thee and thy virtue is noised abroad in all Greece, and has come to our ears in Ionia. Therefore have I taken counsel with myself, and, seeing that Ionia is ever on the brink of peril, but Peloponnesus is stablished on the surest foundations, and forasmuch as it is hard for a man to keep hold of his possessions, I resolved to turn the half of my goods into money, and leave the price in thy hands, knowing well that my treasure will be safe with thee. Now, therefore, I pray thee to receive these moneys, and take these tokens, and keep them well; and whosoever cometh with the like tokens and requireth of thee the treasure, to him restore it." Then Glaucus took the money and the tokens, and put them away.

Many years after the sons of him who had left the deposit came to Glaucus, showed the tokens, and demanded the money. But Glaucus put them off with this answer: "I cannot recall to mind the matter of which ye speak, but I will make inquiry, and do all justice. If I received the money I will duly repay it, but if I never received it at all I will appeal to the

laws of the Greeks against you. Four months from now ye shall have my answer." The Milesians departed very sorrowful, thinking that they were robbed of their money. But Glaucus went to Delphi to ask of the oracle. To his question: "Shall I lay perjury to my soul, and steal the money?" the priestess swiftly made answer thus:

"Glaucus, a present gain is wafted on perjury's  
breath.

Swear ' for the sinner, the saint, are thralls to  
a common death.

But swift from the perjurer's lips a demon of  
ruin springs,

Born without hands or feet, and sped on in-  
visible wings.

Straight on the villain's abode he descends,  
and sweeps it away:

But the house of the righteous shall stand, nor  
his generation decay."

Then Glaucus feared, and asked pardon for his words; but the priestess answered that in tempting the god he was as guilty as if he had done the deed. Glaucus made haste, and sent for the Milesians, and gave them back their money. But Heaven punishes the guilty thought no less than the guilty act, and the family of Glaucus was utterly cut off, root and branch, so that three generations afterwards it had neither name nor place in Sparta.



# Tales of Athens

## I

### INTRODUCTORY

"Ancient of days ! august Athena ! where,  
Where are thy men of might, thy grand in soul ?  
Gone—glimmering through the dream of things that  
were.

First in the race that led to glory's goal,  
They won, and pass'd away." \*

**W**E have wandered far together, and passed through mighty lands, whose names were a wonder and a terror to the ancient world. Chaldæa, Assyria, Egypt, Lydia, Persia — each in its turn the seat of a great empire, which in extent of territory and material power far surpassed the foremost of the Greek states at the height of their prosperity. But if we name these Eastern kingdoms, and ask ourselves the question: What do we owe to this land, or what do we owe to that? we shall find that our debt is small indeed. We can still read their history engraved on their monuments or on the walls of their palaces. We can still gaze in wonder on the monstrous idols of the gods or the devils which they worshipped.

\* Byron : *Childs Harold*, Canto ii.



## Athens—the Acropolis

By permission of the English Photographic Co., Athens



But, repeating our question, we must answer again: "With one or two notable exceptions we owe them little or nothing."

Now let us turn to Athens, and once more put the question: What do we owe to her?—and we need not be ashamed if our eyes grow moist, and our hearts beat a quicker measure, as we think of the immensity of our debt. What do we owe to Athens? You will be surprised, perhaps, at my answer, but it is no more than the literal truth. We owe it to her that we stand here as free men to-day, and draw the dear breath of liberty, and look on the glad light of the sun. We owe to her nearly all that is best in us, nearly all that raises us above the savage state: our sense of beauty, our thirst for knowledge, our governed liberty, our reverence for truth. For it is not palaces like cities, nor cities like provinces, nor hoards of gold, nor the tramp of armed millions which make a nation great. That people is the greatest whose dominion is mightiest in the unseen empire of the mind. And this is why we still pay to Athens the lawful tribute of our reasonable worship.

Of the beginnings of the Athenian State we know nothing certain. The Athenians called themselves "Earth-born"—that is, sons of the soil on which they lived—and not, like the Dorians, intruders who had wandered from another home. In the fifth century before Christ there were still old-fashioned Athenian gentlemen who retained the ancient form of dress, and rolled up their hair in a knot, fastened with a golden brooch in the

## 116 Stories from Greek History

form of a grasshopper, the symbol which marked them as sons of the soil.

What we know of the early history of Athens gives little promise of her future greatness. We get a glimpse of a little community, confined to a narrow strip of territory about equal in extent to one of the smaller English counties. Such wealth as the country possessed was concentrated in the hands of a few powerful families, while the rest of the population was sunk in poverty and misery. Men gave up their fields, and even their liberty, and the liberty of their wives and children, to pay their debts. The whole land was dotted with stone pillars, recording how poor men had sold the little farms on which they and their fathers were born ; and bands of sad-faced exiles, who had bowed their necks in the evil days for bread, trooped wearily to the sea, to wear the heavy yoke of slavery in foreign lands.

At last the oppressions of the rich and the sufferings of the poor became so intolerable that the State was threatened with ruin. Then the people cried aloud in their need for someone to save them, and one man arose in answer to their call. That man was Solon, the same who warned Cræsus in the hour of his pride, and on whose name Cræsus called in the hour of his extremity. Solon was now called upon to give laws to Athens, and set in order the State. His first task was to undo as far as possible the evils of past years. He relieved the poor of a portion of their debts, and recalled all who had been sold into slavery.

And now might be seen a piteous sight : back they came in hundreds, those miserable creatures who had sold their very bodies that they might eat a piece of bread. Many of them had grown old in bondage, and returned crippled in limb, and broken-hearted, to find a grave in the cruel land which had cast them out. Even their native language had been forgotten in those dark years of shame : " They spoke like oracles," we are told—" words hard to be understood—for their tongues had grown unused to Attic speech."

Solon now set to work to give the Athenians a constitution—that is, a fixed form of government, which you may see described in your history books. When his work was done—as far as it could be done by one man in those early days—he determined to leave Athens for a time, and travel in distant lands. But laws alone will not make a people prosperous, and the old disorders soon broke out again. Many a year had still to pass, and many a bitter struggle to be fought out, before the Athenians learnt the great lesson of self-knowledge and the true source of their greatness. The character of a people, like that of an individual, ripens by slow degrees ; and in the history of Athens, as elsewhere, we see the truth of the proverb that men learn by suffering.

## II

## THE SONS OF ALCMÆON

**W**HEN Croesus sent messengers to Delphi to inquire concerning the success of his designs against Persia he was assisted by a noble Athenian, named Alcmaeon, who as a Greek, and a man of high rank, was able to make matters easy for the Lydian envoys. On their return they told their master of the kindness which had been shewn them by Alcmaeon. Now, it was a point of honour with the princes of Asia never to leave a benefit unrewarded. So Croesus sent for Alcmaeon to Sardis, and, showing him the royal treasury, bade him take as much gold as he could carry away on his person. Then the cunning Alcmaeon prepared himself thus: he put on a huge tunic, with long skirts, thrust his feet into the biggest pair of boots he could find, and thus equipped made his way into the treasure-chamber. There his eye lighted on a great heap of gold dust. He pounced greedily upon it, crammed the vacant space in his boots, filled up the lap of his tunic, shook as much as he could of the precious dust into his hair, and then, having stuffed his mouth as full as it would hold, crawled painfully away with his costly burden, hair glittering, cheeks bulging, the seams of his tunic cracking under the load, and his feet dragging heavily across the floor. Loud was the mirth of Croesus as he saw that monstrous figure, and

royally did he reward his guest for making such fine sport ; for besides what he had brought with him he gave Alcmaeon as much again. So Alcmaeon went back to Athens a wealthy man ; and out of that wealth he sent a four-horsed chariot to Olympia, and won the chariot race.

The son of this Alcmaeon, named Megacles, made his family famous throughout all Greece. It happened in this way. Clisthenes, Tyrant of Sicyon, one of the chief towns in Northern Peloponnesus, had a fair daughter, named Agariste. Wishing to find her a husband of the noblest in Greece, he made proclamation at the Olympic games, inviting all who thought themselves worthy to appear at Sicyon within sixty days as suitors for his daughter's hand. Twelve suitors came in answer to the invitation, all names of renown in Greece, and among them were Megacles and Hippoclides from Athens. A whole year they were entertained by Clisthenes, who had first satisfied himself of their noble birth ; and he made trial of them both singly and together, as to their manhood, their temper, their learning, and their character. Those who were younger he tried in all manner of bodily exercises, comparing their courage, strength, and skill. Above all, he watched their manners in social gatherings, to assure himself of their refinement and breeding. Those who pleased him best were the two suitors from Athens ; and of these two he favoured Hippoclides, who seemed a better man than Megacles, and was related to the Tyrants of Corinth.



## 120 Stories from Greek History

At last the great day arrived on which Clisthenes was to make his choice. He sacrificed a hundred oxen, and made a great feast for the suitors and all the citizens of Sicyon. When the banquet was over, and while they were sitting over their wine, there was much talk among the suitors, each striving to outdo the others by a great display of wit and learning. But by common consent Hippoclidès surpassed all the rest by the brilliancy of his conversation. At last, growing tired of talk, he called for a flute-player, and, bidding him play a dance-measure, began to dance. And he himself was much pleased with his dancing; but Clisthenes liked it ill, and sat looking moodily on. Then Hippoclidès, wishing to make further display of his skill, bade bring a table, and, mounting upon it, danced first in the Attic, then in the Spartan manner, and finally stood on his head, and waved his legs in the air in time to the music.

Up to this point Clisthenes had restrained himself, though much scandalised by the indecency of the performance, but when he saw Hippoclidès dancing with his feet in the air he could hold out no longer, and cried: "Brave dancing, Hippoclidès! but you've danced away your bride." "All one to Hippoclidès!" answered the light-hearted Athenian; and the saying became a proverb. Then Clisthenes addressed the twelve suitors thus: "Sirs, I thank you for the honour you have done me in seeking my daughter's hand, and I would that it were in my power to

make you all my sons-in-law ; but seeing that my daughter is one, and you are twelve, that may not be. Now, therefore, I will send you home, and to each of the eleven who have failed to win my daughter I will give a talent of silver. But my daughter Agariste shall wed Megacles the Athenian."

Thus Megacles won his bride. And from that match was born Clisthenes, named after his grandfather, who gave freedom to Athens. A granddaughter of Megacles, named also Agariste, married Xanthippus, and became the mother of the great Pericles. Before his birth his mother dreamed that she had brought forth a lion ; and he became, indeed, among men what the lion is among beasts—the strongest and the noblest spirit that ever held sway over the minds and wills of a great people.

### III

#### PISISTRATUS AND HIS SONS

**T**HERE was a certain Hippocrates, a descendant of the ancient kings of Pylos, whose ancestors had settled at Athens. It was a famous house, the house of Neleus and Nestor—Nestor, "the clear speaker of Pylos, from whose lips dropped words sweeter than honey." The royal exiles rose to honour and power in their adopted city, and some of them came to be kings of Athens. But the days of

## 122 Stories from Greek History

their greatness were long since passed away, and Hippocrates was living at Athens as an ordinary citizen when a portent befell him which seemed to promise a revival of his house's fame. While he was preparing a sacrifice at the Olympian festival the cauldrons which were standing, filled with meat and water, ready for the feast, began to steam and bubble and boil over before the fire was lighted. There was another who saw that marvel—Chilon, a Spartan, one of the Wise Men of Greece—and he was troubled by the thing, being a friend of Hippocrates, and warned him, saying: "Hippocrates, my spirit is troubled for thee and for thine house. Now, therefore, if thou hast a wife, send her away, lest children be born unto thee; if thou hast a son, disown him, lest evil befall thee through him because of this sign." But Hippocrates paid no heed to Chilon's words, and so in time he became the father of Pisistratus, who was named after a son of the ancient Nestor.

The people of Attica at this time were divided into three parties—the Highlanders, the Lowlanders, and the Merchants. Of these, the Lowlanders were the rich men of rank, who owned the fertile lands of the plain about Athens; the Merchants were the trading class, who lived by the sea; and the Highlanders were the poor shepherds and herdsmen of the mountains. The Merchants and Lowlanders had each a leader, but the Highlanders had none to speak for them, and promote their cause. This was Pisistratus' opportunity. The blood of ancient kings which

ran in his veins, and the strange sign which had preceded his birth, prompted him to come forward as a rival in the struggle for power. And what better cover could he have for his own ambition than to appear as a champion of the poor and weak? So he set himself up as the leader of the Highlanders, kept a band of followers ready to his call, and waited for a favourable moment to strike for power.

One morning the crowd assembled in the market-place, buying and selling, and discussing public affairs, was startled by a wild commotion. Through the swaying masses of the people a mule car came galloping, driven at headlong speed. In it sat Pisistratus in woeful plight: both he and his mules were covered with blood, as though lately engaged in a deadly encounter. He drew up in the centre of the market-place, crying: "A rescue, citizens! Bring a rescue to a man hard pressed by assassins, who seek his life!" Then he explained to the astonished multitude that as he was driving out to his farm he had been set upon by his enemies, and hardly escaped alive. Now, the whole story was an invention, and the wounds had been inflicted on Pisistratus by himself to give colour to his tale. But the simple Athenians gave ready ear to his words, and voted Pisistratus a bodyguard of club-bearers. With their help he made himself master of the Acropolis, a strongly fortified place, built on a precipitous hill, and commanding the city. Thus Pisistratus made himself Tyrant of Athens, and ruled for a short time without

## 124 Stories from Greek History

violence or wrong, showing due respect to all existing offices and forms of government.

But a position so easily gained was as easily lost. After a short period of power he was driven out by the joint efforts of the Lowlanders and Merchants, who had combined against him. Soon afterwards fresh disputes arose between these two parties, and Megacles, the leader of the mercantile faction, invited Pisistratus to return, offering him his daughter in marriage as a pledge of good faith. Pisistratus agreed, and the two together contrived a plot, which seems simple beyond belief, to bring the tyrant back to Athens. In a village near Athens there lived a certain Phya, a woman of exceeding beauty and great stature, being little short of six feet in height. Having won her as an ally they dressed her out in a helmet and a complete suit of armour, and after carefully instructing her how she was to bear herself, they set her on a chariot, and drove with her towards the city. Heralds were sent before them, who ran about the streets shouting: "Oyez, oyez, men of Athens! Hearken and give ear! Here comes Athene,\* bringing Pisistratus, whom she honours before all men, to her temple in the city." And the Athenians, we are told, gave ready credence to that bold lie, and when the woman came driving in her car, with Megacles on one side and Pisistratus on the other, they worshipped the goddess, and welcomed her favourite.

\* Patron goddess of Athens, which was named after her.



Greek Cavalry Soldier



By such means did Pisistratus become tyrant for the second time and, according to the agreement, he wedded the daughter of Megacles. But as he had already grown-up sons by a former marriage he slighted his young wife, and scorned her, and treated her ill. When Megacles heard of this he was angry, and turned once more to his old rivals the Lowlanders, and the two parties again combined against the tyrant. Seeing his danger Pisistratus gave way without a blow, and retired with his sons to Eretria, in Eubœa. Then they debated what was to be done, and by the advice of Hippias, the eldest of his sons, it was agreed that they should make a great effort to recover their power. They collected money and allies, and when all was ready crossed over from Eretria, and took possession of Marathon, on the coast of Attica. Here they were joined by the malcontents from the city, and by others from the country districts who favoured their design.

Megacles and his party in Athens had hitherto paid no heed to the movements of Pisistratus, but when they heard that he was actually marching on the city they mustered their forces, and sallied forth to meet him. The two armies were almost in sight of one another, and those under Megacles, neglecting all precautions, were scattered on the plain, some busy with their breakfast, some playing dice, others sleeping, when a prophet came to Pisistratus, and chanted these lines :

“The cast is thrown, the net is spread;  
The shoal is ours, ere night be fled.”



## 126 Stories from Greek History

Pisistratus took the hint, and falling on his incautious enemies easily put them to flight. Then he mounted his sons on horseback, and sent them in pursuit of the fugitives ; and they, whenever they overtook a party of the flying Athenians, gave them good words, and bade them be of good cheer, as no harm was intended them. For so their father had directed, wishing to divide his enemies by holding out hopes of good treatment.

And being now Tyrant of Athens for the third time he took such measures that his power struck up roots, and none could overthrow it again. He kept a small army of hired soldiers, enlarged his revenue, took hostages of those among his opponents who remained in Athens, and placed them at Naxos, where his friend Lygdamis reigned as tyrant by his aid ; and in order to win the favour of Apollo he purified Delos, the birthplace and favourite home of the god, taking up all the bones of those who had been buried within sight of the temple, and removing them to another part of the island. For Apollo is a clean god, the god of purity and light, and brooks not that aught of foulness or corruption should approach his presence.

Unlike most of the Greek tyrants, Pisistratus was a mild and merciful ruler. He laid a tax of one-twentieth on the goods of the citizens, but neither robbed nor oppressed them. He gave Athens an improved water-supply, and beautified the city with new public buildings. He was the patron of poets and men of learning, and is said

to have been the first who collected the scattered songs of Homer, and reduced them in writing to their present form. After a long and prosperous reign he died in a good old age, and Hippias his son reigned in his stead.

Hippias for some time followed in the footsteps of his father, ruling gently and well. But after the assassination of his brother Hipparchus the whole character of his government changed, and he became suspicious and cruel. The circumstances which led to the death of Hipparchus made that event a hallowed memory in the minds of the Athenians, and raised his slayers to the rank of heroes and founders of Athenian liberty. And this is how it happened. There was a certain Harmodius, a young lad of middle station, whose great personal beauty won him high distinction among a people who judged by the eye hardly less than by the mind. Between him and Aristogeiton, an Athenian of the same rank, there was a tie of peculiar and tender friendship. Now, Hipparchus had a grudge against Harmodius, arising out of some slight affront, and meanly abused his position as brother of Hippias to put a public insult on his family. He invited the sister of Harmodius to take part in one of the religious processions at Athens, and when she presented herself at the time and place appointed dismissed her with contempt, as unworthy to share in the service of the gods. Enraged by this insult the fiery young Athenian determined, with his friend, to rid Athens of her tyrants at a single blow. The stroke was to be aimed, not at Hipparchus directly,

## 128 Stories from Greek History

but at Hippias, the actual holder of the tyranny ; for they doubtless hoped, in the confusion which would follow, to slay Hipparchus also. A few friends were made privy to the plot, and the time arranged was that of the great Panathenaic festival, when all the Athenians would appear in arms, and would, therefore, be able to bring effectual help, when the cry was raised : " Down with the Tyrants ! "

When the fatal day arrived Harmodius and Aristogeiton set out in search of Hippias, with their daggers concealed in myrtle boughs, which it was the custom to carry in the procession. They found him in a suburb of Athens, called the Potter's Field, arranging the citizens in their order. But what was their dismay when they saw him engaged in familiar conversation with one of their own friends and fellow-conspirators ! They thought that all was lost, their hearts failed them, and they turned away. Believing that their doom was sealed, they resolved to be revenged at least for their private wrong, and rushed off to find Hipparchus. As soon as they caught sight of him they fell upon him, and slew him. Harmodius was cut down by the guards on the spot ; Aristogeiton escaped for the moment, but was afterwards taken, and tortured to death.

The coolness of Hippias saved him at this dangerous crisis. He was still in the same suburb where the conspirators had found him, when news was brought to him of his brother's death. He turned at once, with a composed face, to the

armed multitude, and gave the order to pile arms. "Go into yonder field"—pointing to a field some distance off—"and wait for me there." The Athenians, knowing as yet nothing of what had occurred, and supposing that Hippias was about to deliver the usual harangue, laid down shield and spear, and marched away to the place indicated. Then Hippias ordered his guard to remove the arms, and, making search among the assembled host, arrested all those on whom daggers were found.

Thus the great conspiracy was stamped out, and nothing left of it but a memory dear to all Athenians, who for ages afterwards sang this drinking song, telling of the avenger's dagger which was hidden in a myrtle bough :

"In a wreath of myrtle I'll wear my glaive,  
Like Harmodius and Aristogiton brave,  
Who, striking the tyrant down,  
Made Athens a freeman's town.

"Harmodius, our darling, thou art not dead!  
Thou liv'st in the isles of the blest, 'tis said,  
With Achilles first in speed,  
And Tydides Diomede.

"In a wreath of myrtle I'll wear my glaive,  
Like Harmodius and Aristogiton brave,  
When the twain on Athena's day  
Did the tyrant Hipparchus slay.

"For aye shall your fame in the land be told,  
Harmodius and Aristogiton bold,  
Who, striking the tyrant down,  
Made Athens a freeman's town." \*

\* A reputed scolon of Callistratus, translated by John Conington.

## 130 Stories from Greek History

The immediate result of the outbreak was that the bonds of tyranny were drawn tighter, and the rule of Hippias now began to recall the worst days of Cypselus and Periander at Corinth. For fear had entered into the tyrant's heart—and fear makes men cruel. Hippias put many of the citizens to death, and began to look abroad for a place of refuge in case of revolution. With this view he married his daughter to the son of the Tyrant of Lampsacus, a subject of the Persian king.

The day was now at hand when Athens was to shake off her yoke. Chief among those who gave her back her freedom was that famous family of whom we have already heard so much—the Alcmaeonidæ, or Sons of Alcmaeon. When Pisistratus came back after his second exile from Athens they had retired from the city, and lived many years as banished men. One attempt they made to return by force, and built a fort at Lipsydrion, on Mount Parnes, from which they made descents on Athens; but they were driven off with loss, and compelled to give up their design. Yet the fame of that attempt lived long afterwards, as we see from the words of another drinking song, of which these lines still survive :

“Ay me, thou traitorous Lipsydrion !  
What men hast thou destroyed,  
Strong in fight, and lovers of the land,  
Who in those days revealed  
Of what fathers they were born.”

When they found that force would not avail,

the Alcmaeonidæ tried a slower but surer way. The fame of the oracle at Delphi still stood high in Greece, especially among the Dorians. Now, the Alcmaeonidæ had gained great credit with the priests of Delphi by their manner of executing a contract which they had undertaken, to rebuild the Delphian temple; for, having contracted to build the temple of common stone, they went beyond their agreement by facing the building with Parian marble. To make matters surer, they bribed the priestess of Delphi to lend them her voice. Accordingly, whenever the Spartans came to consult the oracle, on public or private occasions, they met with one unvarying answer: "Athens must be liberated." The Spartans, who were friends and allies of the family of Pisistratus, hesitated for some time to obey the summons; but at last the voice of the god prevailed, and they sent their king with an army to drive out Hippias. After one unsuccessful attempt they succeeded in routing the forces of the tyrant, and shut him up in the citadel. An accident threw into their hands the children of Hippias, who were being sent out of the country for greater security. To recover his children Hippias was ready to make any sacrifice, and he agreed to go into voluntary exile on condition that they were restored. He withdrew with his family to Sigeum, not far from the ancient site of Troy. And so ended the rule of the tyrants at Athens, which had lasted six and thirty years.

## The Revolt of Ionia

**P**ERHAPS some of you have not forgotten the debate which was held among the princes of Ionia whom Darius had left to guard the bridge over the Danube when he marched into the wilds of Scythia, and how the king and his army were saved by the exertions of Histiaëus. We have now to take up the main thread of our story from this point. As soon as Darius reached Sardis he sent for Histiaëus, and bade him choose his reward. Now, there was a fair spot on the River Strymon, in Thrace, on which many a Greek had cast longing eyes. Histiaëus asked and obtained this piece of land from Darius. Having received it he lost no time, but at once began to build walls, and raise a fortified city. And there is no knowing how far his busy brain might have carried him (for he was a man of restless energy and far-reaching ambition) had not his preparations attracted the notice of Megabyzus, who had lately conquered all this district, and was in command there under the Persian king. When Megabyzus saw Darius at Sardis he began thus: "O king, what hast thou done to suffer this shrewd and dangerous man to build a city in Thrace, where there is timber for shipbuilding in abundance,

and a multitude of rowers, and mines of silver, and a great host of both Greeks and barbarians,\* who under such a leader may work bitter mischief to thee and thy house? Send, I pray thee, ere it be too late, and summon him with friendly words into thy presence; and when he is come carry him with thee to Persia, and take heed that he return not any more to the coast." Darius saw the wisdom of this advice, and sending for Histiaëus, under the pretence that he could not live without him, carried him off to Sousa, where the proud Greek remained much against his will, in name the king's guest, in reality a prisoner.

Since the departure of Histiaëus, Miletus had been governed by his son-in-law, Aristagoras. It happened about this time that certain nobles from the island of Naxos, who had been driven out in a struggle with the people, came to Miletus, and asked Aristagoras to restore them. Alone he was not strong enough to help them, so he went to Artaphernes, brother of Darius, who was now in command at Sardis, and said: "My lord, at one blow you may win the fair island of Naxos, with all its wealth and its men; and, once master of Naxos, you will easily gain possession of the surrounding islands, whence it is but one step farther to the great and wealthy island of Eubœa. All this shall cost you nothing; I myself will defray all charges. I ask for nothing but one hundred ships." "A hundred is not enough," answered Artaphernes, well pleased with the hope

\* All who were not Greeks were so called by them.



## 134 Stories from Greek History

of fresh conquests ; “ you shall have two hundred ; but first I must ask leave of the king.” Darius readily gave his consent, and a fleet of two hundred galleys, commanded by a great Persian noble, named Megabates, was fitted out against Naxos. When all was ready Aristagoras weighed anchor, and gave out that he was bound for the Hellespont, so as to arouse no suspicion of his designs among the Naxians.

But the whole enterprise was ruined, as happened so often among the Greeks, by a private dispute. While the fleet was lying off Chios, waiting for a wind to carry it to Naxos, the Admiral Megabates in going his rounds found a Greek vessel, commanded by a friend of Aristagoras, unguarded. Being very angry, he ordered the captain to be thrust half way through a port-hole, and left bound in this position. The man sent a message to Aristagoras, who went and begged Megabates to release him, and being refused, he went himself and set him free. Megabates was incensed at this breach of discipline, and a violent quarrel ensued, in the course of which Aristagoras used bitter and contemptuous language. The Persian was so provoked that he determined to betray the whole design, and sent a message to the Naxians, informing them of the attack meditated against them. The Naxians at once hurried all their movable property within the walls, and placed the city in a state of defence. Accordingly, when Aristagoras appeared off the harbour he found everything ready to receive him, and after



"He bade me tell thee to shave my Head"



laying siege to the place for four months he was obliged to draw off, leaving all his great promises to Artaphernes unfulfilled. He was in no position to pay the cost of the expedition, and saw himself threatened with the loss at least of his command at Miletus, if not with worse.

One evening the young prince sat moodily in his place, pondering over his desperate state. "What shall I do?" he cried aloud; "whither shall I turn? I shall lose my city—I may lose my head! What if I . . . but no, the risk is too great . . . and yet—" His voice died away in low mutterings, and he seemed lost in thought. A servant entered, and cut short his meditations by announcing that a messenger stood without, desiring to speak with him. "Bid him enter," said Aristagoras. A man entered stained with the marks of long and hasty travel. After a low obeisance he stood with bowed head, waiting for the prince to speak. "Whence comest thou?" asked Aristagoras. "From Sousa, my lord, from the lord Histæus, thy father-in-law." "What is his will?" "He bade me tell thee to shave my head," was the strange answer. The Prince of Miletus gazed wonderingly at the man, thinking he must be mad, but seeing him to be sober and serious, he led him to a private place, and shaved off his hair, and on the slave's bare scalp were traced these words: "Histæus bids thee revolt from Darius."

The arrival of this message decided the wavering mind of Aristagoras. He called a meeting of all

## 136 Stories from Greek History

whom he knew to be impatient of their bondage to Persia, and sent the signal of revolt to all the cities of Ionia. Having set matters in train, he himself embarked on board a trireme, intending to ask for aid among the leading cities of Greece.

And first he came to Sparta, where Cleomenes at that time was king. He asked an audience of Cleomenes, and was brought into his presence. Now, Aristagoras had brought with him a great brazen tablet, on which was engraved the whole compass of the earth, and all the sea, and all rivers. For Miletus was famed for her learned men, and on this brazen tablet was one of the first maps that had ever been made. Aristagoras then stood before the King of Sparta, and said: "Marvel not, Cleomenes, that I have been so earnest to come hither. The sons of Ionia are in sore need. Shame it is that any Greek should be a slave—a shame to himself, and to all the Greeks, but above all to you, the leaders and champions of Greece. I adjure thee, therefore, by the gods of Greece to save the Ionians, your kinsmen, from bondage. Fear not! 'Tis an easy task. The Persians are not men of war; but as for you, ye are warriors from your youth up, as all the world knows. What can they do against you, these breeched and turbaned barbarians, with their short spears, and bows and arrows? Now will I tell thee of the good things of this great land of Asia, such good things as are not in all the world besides—gold and silver, and embroidered raiment, and beasts of burden, and slaves. Ye have but to

put forth your hand, and all these shall be yours."

Then he pointed to the map, and named the provinces of Asia in their order, saying: "See here, next to Ionia, is Lydia, a fertile land, rich in gold and silver; next comes Phrygia, the fairest pasture and corn land of all that I know; after that Cappadocia; and, bordering on Cappadocia, Cilicia, whose coasts lie along that sea where is the island of Cyprus—and this one province pays a tribute of fifty talents every year to the king." Then, drawing near the end of that easy journey across the map, Aristagoras showed the wondering Spartan the sacred Cissian land, where on the banks of Choaspes was built the great city of Sousa, the capital and home of the Persian kings. "Here dwells the Great King," he said; "here are his treasures. If ye take this city Zeus himself shall not be richer than ye. Do ye, then, waste your blood in battles with Messenians and Arcadians and Argives, stubborn fighters, from whom ye have little or nothing to win, and will ye now draw back when ye may gain all Asia almost without a blow?"

Cleomenes answered: "My friend from Miletus, return in three days, and thou shalt have my answer." When Aristagoras returned on the day appointed Cleomenes asked him this simple question: "How many days' journey is it from the sea to Sousa?" Here Aristagoras, who had so far played his game well, made a false move. If he had paused to think he would have concealed

## 138 Stories from Greek History

the truth—for Greeks of his type never stuck at a lie—but, answering in haste, he said: "About three months' march," and was going on to explain the manner of that journey when Cleomenes cut him short, saying: "Milesian friend, get thee gone from Sparta before set of sun. Woe worth the words by which thou wouldst lead the Spartans a three months' journey from the sea!"

Saying this Cleomenes left him. But Aristagoras came back again, bearing an olive branch, as was the custom with those who were in sore need: such were called suppliants, and supposed to be under the special protection of the gods. He found Cleomenes sitting with his little daughter Gorgo, and begged him to send the child away, that he might speak freely. "Never mind the child," said Cleomenes; "say on." Then Aristagoras offered the king ten talents, and, Cleomenes refusing, he went on increasing the amount until he reached fifty talents. Cleomenes began to waver, when a shrill, childish voice was heard: "Fly, father, or thou wilt sell thine honour to this stranger!" It was the king's little daughter who had spoken, and such chance words were commonly taken as a sign from heaven. After this Cleomenes resolutely shut his ears against the tempter, and Aristagoras left Sparta, where all his fine words had been spoken in vain. But that vision of conquest which the cunning Ionian had unfolded to Cleomenes was wonderfully fulfilled nearly two centuries later, when the great Alexander swept irresistibly over Asia, and carried

the arms and the arts of Greece to the very borders of India.

Thus repulsed from Sparta, Aristagoras turned to Athens, where he found a very different reception. The Athenians were now in the full enjoyment of those free institutions under which they were soon to rise to the height of glory. These had not been attained without many struggles. They had traitors at home, who sought to hold all political power, for their own and not the city's benefit ; they had enemies abroad, and especially the Spartans, who had now found out the trick which had been played them at Delphi, and had striven with all their might to bring back Hippias. In this they were foiled, chiefly by the opposition of the Corinthians, who remembered the evil days of their own tyrants. Over the sea, Hippias was sitting by the throne of Artaphernes, whispering slanders in the satrap's ear, and poisoning his mind against the young republic, within whose narrow walls was guarded the future of mankind. Artaphernes gave him a ready hearing, and when the Athenians sent envoys to counteract the influence of Hippias they were commanded to take back the tyrant. Roused by this insult, the Athenians broke off the discussion, and were henceforth the avowed enemies of Persia.

Thus Aristagoras found the way prepared for him at Athens. Speaking before the whole assembly of the citizens, he drew the same tempting picture of easy conquest as at Sparta, and added that Miletus had an especial claim on his hearers,



## 140 Stories from Greek History

as being a colony from Athens. The plea was admitted, and it was determined to send twenty ships to the help of the Ionians. To these were added five ships from Eretria, in Eubœa.

On their arrival at Miletus, Aristagoras resolved to march directly against Sardis. A numerous force set out, made their way along the valley of the Cayster, and crossing Mount Tmolus came in sight of Sardis. They captured the city without a blow, all but the Acropolis, where Artaphernes had taken refuge, and dispersed themselves in search of booty. The roofs of the houses of Sardis, and in most cases the walls also, were of reeds. One of the houses was set on fire by a soldier, and, the flames rapidly spreading, the whole city was soon in a blaze. A wild panic ensued among the inhabitants, who rushed for refuge to the spacious market-place in the centre of the city, and rallying here, stood to resist the invaders. The Ionians, finding themselves outnumbered, abandoned their wild design, which had been conceived with more daring than prudence, and retreated rapidly to the sea-coast. At Ephesus they were overtaken by a numerous army, gathered hastily from the adjacent parts of Lydia, and suffered a severe defeat, in which many Greeks of name were killed, and among them the general of the Eretrians, a famous athlete, whose deeds had been sung by the great poet Simonides.

When Darius heard of the burning of Sardis he made no account of the Ionians, thinking that he would soon make his power felt by them; but

on hearing that the Athenians had taken part in that deed he asked who they were. And when he was informed he took a bow, and shot an arrow into the air, crying: "God of my fathers, grant me to get vengeance of the Athenians!" and gave charge to one of his servants to say to him three times every day while he was sitting at meat: "Master, remember the Athenians!" Then he called Histiaëus, and upbraided him as the author of all the troubles in Ionia; but the wily Greek lulled his master's suspicions with fair words, and so completely regained his confidence that he was sent down to Miletus to bring back his countrymen to obedience. So away he went, having stuffed the king with fine promises, vowing that he would not change his clothes until he had not only recovered for Darius all that had been lost, but had made the great island of Sardinia tributary to Persia.

After the part they had taken in the attack on Sardis the Athenians withdrew from the struggle. But the Ionians knew that there was no pardon or escape for them: for good or for evil they were compelled to go on. From Byzantium,\* on the Bosphorus, the flames of revolt rapidly spread through all the coast-towns of Asia to the island of Cyprus, where a number of flourishing Greek cities had long submitted to Persia. Cyprus was subdued, after a year of freedom; and meanwhile the generals of Darius were rapidly taking city after city in the districts near the Hellespont.

\* Now Constantinople.

## 142 Stories from Greek History

And where was now the author of all the mischief—Aristagoras? When he saw the progress of the Persians his heart began to fail him. He had acted from the beginning on selfish motives, and at the first hint of failure he deserted the cause which he led. Gathering a band of volunteers, he sailed from Miletus to Myrcinus, on the Strymon, and soon afterwards was slain, while laying siege to a Thracian town. Thus he who had begun as a rebel against his master ended as a traitor to his country.

He had, doubtless, been well schooled in treachery and falsehood by his worthy father-in-law, Histiaëus. When that ancient plotter came down to Sardis he was keenly questioned by Artaphernes as to the cause of the revolt. "I cannot conceive," he answered with an air of puzzled innocence. "Then hear me," answered Artaphernes, with a bitter smile; "I will enlighten you: he who made this shoe was Histiaëus, and he who put it on was Aristagoras." The guilty conscience of Histiaëus took alarm at these words, and he fled. Getting together a few ships he for some time led a roving life, supporting himself by plunder. About a year after he fell into the hands of Artaphernes, who crucified him, cut off his head, and sent it, embalmed, to Darius, who ordered it to be honourably buried, and blamed Artaphernes for his cruelty to a man who had saved the life of the Great King.

The weary struggle had now dragged on for six years, and the end was at last approaching. The

Persians assembled a great fleet, and determined to strike a decisive blow at Miletus, the chief city of Ionia, and centre of the revolt. The Ionians decided to leave Miletus to make its own defence, and took up their station at Lade, a little island not far from Miletus. The number of the Greek ships was three hundred and fifty-three, that of the Persians ships six hundred. Then the Persian admirals, dreading to do battle against such numbers, summoned the Greek Tyrants of Ionia, who had been driven from their cities at the breaking out of the revolt, and were present in the Persian fleet, and said to them: "Men of Ionia, let each of you now prove a benefactor to the royal house of Persia; go ye, and each persuade his own citizens to desert from the Ionian fleet. If they will do this ye shall promise that they shall suffer no harm because of their revolt; neither shall their temples or their houses be burnt nor shall they themselves endure any violence. But if they will not hear you, but must needs fight the matter out, then shall ye threaten them with the evils which will come upon them after defeat: themselves will we sell into slavery, and their sons and their daughters shall be given to dishonour, and their land we will bestow on others to dwell in." Thus instructed, the tyrants sent their agents to carry the grim message to the Ionian fleet. Their words did not fall to the ground, though at first they met with no response.

Seeing that the decisive moment was at hand, the Greeks met in council, and among others who

## 144 Stories from Greek History

spoke was Dionysius of Phocæa. Sharp and stern were his words, and well would it have been for the Ionians if they had taken his warning to heart. "Our fate hangs on a hair, men of Ionia," he said. "Freedom or slavery—which is it to be? Freedom, or such slavery as they endure who have tasted liberty and been brought back to bondage? Now, therefore, if ye will endure a little hardship, ye shall conquer your enemies, and live as free men. But if ye give way to softness, and will not obey orders, I have no hope that ye will escape the vengeance of the king. Harken only to me, and trust yourselves to my hands, and I promise, if Heaven is just, that either the enemy will not face us in battle or, if they do, will be utterly overthrown."

Struck by the earnestness of Dionysius, and feeling the peril in which they stood, the Ionians gave him leave to do with them as he pleased. He proved no easy taskmaster: every day he manned the whole fleet, and kept the crews and fighting men toiling for hours in the burning sun, practising naval manoeuvres. For a week the Ionians endured this discipline; then their flesh began to rebel against it, and loud murmurs arose. "What god have we offended," they cried, "that we suffer this penance? Have we lost our wits, thus to submit ourselves to this braggart of Phocæa, who brings but three ships to the fleet—who grinds us down with intolerable hardships, so that many of us have fallen sick, and many more

are likely to do so? Better far to be bondsmen to the king hereafter than endure this present yoke of slavery. Go to, let us obey this man no longer." After this Dionysius found that his brief term of influence was over. True to their nature, the Ionians chose to purchase present ease by future pain. They pitched their tents on the island, and spent their time like a holiday party, lounging and idling in the shade. Hereupon the message of the tyrants, unheeded at first, began to work like a subtle poison in the fleet. The Samians were the first to set the example of treason. When the Persian fleet came on, and the action was about to begin, they hoisted sail, left their post, and retreated to Samos—all but eleven ships, whose crews mutinied, and refused to obey orders. So these eleven, and the hundred ships from Chios, kept their station, and fought manfully. But the greater part of the Ionians followed the example of the Samians. The Chians, having lost most of their ships, fled to the mainland. Here they abandoned their ships, and marched on foot until they came into the territory of Ephesus. It chanced that the Ephesian women were just then keeping the feast of Demeter outside the walls. The approach of so many armed men caused a panic among the women, and those in the city, hearing the commotion, rushed to arms, and sallied forth in full force, supposing that brigands were carrying off the women. In this belief they fell upon the Chians, and slew them all.

As for Dionysius, the brave Phocæan, after

## 146 Stories from Greek History

taking three of the enemy's ships, he sailed away to Phœnicia, and having there sunk several merchantmen, and taken much booty, he made his way to Sicily, where he pursued the trade of a bold buccaneer, plundering the ships of Carthage and Tuscany.

The defeat at Lade sealed the fate of Miletus. Invested by the whole Persian army and fleet, and assailed by mines and military engines, the Queen of Ionia quickly fell, and all her children were sent in bonds to Sousa. Darius gave them a place to dwell in, called Ampe, near the mouth of the Tigris. When the fall of Miletus was known at Athens it caused deep sorrow among the Athenians. How bitterly they thought of the event we may learn from their treatment of Phrynichus, a tragic poet. Phrynichus was so ill-advised as to bring on the stage a drama entitled "The Capture of Miletus." During the performance the whole audience burst into tears, and Phrynichus was fined a thousand drachms \* for reminding the Athenians of their sorrows.

The triumph of the Great King was complete. Chios, Lesbos, and Tenedos fell into the hands of the Persians, who swept each island as they took it with a drag-net, the meaning of this expression being that a line of men, reaching from the northern to the southern end of the island, advanced slowly through its whole breadth, driving the inhabitants before them, as hunters beat a covert, so that not one might escape.

When the last embers of the revolt were stamped out the Persians made good their words, and all the horrors with which they had threatened the Ionians at Lade fell upon the conquered. Boys and maidens were sold into slavery, and cities and temples were burnt.

Thus the burden of slavery, which had pressed lightly on Ionia in the days of Croesus, and grown heavier under the rule of Cyrus, now crushed her to earth with an intolerable weight.



## Marathon

“A nation is not worthy to be saved if, in the hour of its fate, it will not gather up all its jewels of manhood and life, and go down into the conflict, however bloody and doubtful, resolved on measureless ruin or complete success.” \*

**S** EVEN years have passed since the fall of Miletus. Ionia still bears the yoke of Persia. The Great King has stretched out his arm into the Ægean, and laid hands on three of the fairest among the isles of Greece. Again and again his armies have passed the Hellespont, and all the coast-lands north of the Ægean as far as Thessaly own his sway. Nearer and nearer grows the peril. Already Darius has sent round heralds to demand earth and water of the Greeks; and some of the cities have obeyed the summons, and sent these tokens of submission. Macedon, one day to be the conqueror, is now the vassal of Persia. Every day for more than ten years the call for vengeance has sounded in the ears of Darius: “Master, remember the Athenians!” Hippias is at Sousa, doing his best to fan the flame of wrath against the presumptuous city which has defied the might of Persia. All obstacles are removed, and the king

\* J. A. Garfield.

may let his anger have scope. The rod is prepared, and the blow is about to fall.

Datis, a Mede, and Artaphernes, nephew of Darius, were given charge of the expedition. Darius despatched them with this command: "Go take Athens and Eretria, and bring their men bound before me." So these two went down to the coast, and set sail with six hundred war-galleys and a great host of transport ships for Ionia. Arrived there, they struck straight across the sea, and came to Naxos, where they burnt the city, and took captive all but those who had fled to the mountains. Thence they passed on to Delos, the birthplace and favourite abode of Apollo. The Delians had all forsaken the island and fled at the approach of the Persians. But Datis, who belonged to the priestly caste of the Medes, revered Apollo as the glorious sun-god whom all the Medes and Persians worshipped. So he would not suffer the fleet to cast anchor off Delos, but took up his station at Rhenea, the neighbouring island; and, hearing that the Delians had fled to Tenos, he sent a herald with this courteous message: "Holy men, why have ye fled, and why harbour ye unjust thoughts of me? I am charged by the king, and were it not so I myself have sense enough to do no harm either to the land or to them who dwell there, in the place where the Two Gods \* were born. Go ye, therefore, back to your homes, and fear naught from me." Then Datis offered three hundred

\* Apollo and his sister Artemis (Diana).

## 150 Stories from Greek History

talents of incense on the altar, and having done this, sailed on to Eretria. The hapless Eretrians were divided in their counsels. Some were for abandoning the city and flying to the mountains, others for resisting, while a third party hoped to save themselves by betraying the city. When Datis landed his army they made no attempt to meet him in the field, but prepared for a siege. A fierce assault began at once on the wall: for six days the Eretrians held out stubbornly, and many of the Persians fell, but on the seventh two of the chief among the citizens opened the gates to the enemy. Thus the vengeance of Darius was already half satisfied. Eretria was a smoking ruin, and her sons were sent in fetters to Persia.

On the northern side of Attica, facing that part of Eubœa where Eretria had lately stood, lies the pleasant vale of Marathon. Thither Hippias led his Persians, thinking it a convenient place for the movements of cavalry. The night before he had seen a vision in sleep: his mother seemed to draw near him, and promise him a portion in his native land. Cheered by his dream, he took an active part in disembarking, and setting in order, the Persian army. While thus busied, the old man was seized with a violent fit of sneezing and coughing, and his teeth being loose, one of them was dislodged by the shaking, and dropped on the sand. He eagerly sought the fallen tooth, and seemed much disturbed in mind that he could not find it. At last he gave up the search in



The Plain of Marathon  
By permission of the English Photographic Co., Athens



despair, and sighing heavily, said to the bystanders: "Woe is me! All my portion in the land of Attica is that which has given a grave to my tooth!"

When the news of the landing of the Persians at Marathon reached Athens, the Athenians set out in full force to meet them. They were led by ten generals, among whom was Miltiades, Tyrant of the Chersonnese, a narrow strip of land running into the sea north of the Hellespont. Seven years before he had been obliged to fly from the land where he and his ancestors ruled as princes. He was hotly pursued by the Persian fleet; for he would have been a welcome prize to send to Darius, who had not forgotten that Miltiades would have broken up the bridge over the Danube when the Persians were flying from the hosts of Scythia. He reached Athens in safety, and now the day had dawned which was to give him an immortal name.

Before they left the city the generals sent off Phidippides, a swift runner, and courier by profession, with an urgent message to Sparta. It was a long and difficult journey: his road lay from Athens to Eleusis; then on through the isthmus by Megara and Corinth; over the borders of Sicyon and Argos into the wild mountains of Arcadia; and so by a steep descent into the vale of Sparta. Yet such was his speed and endurance that he reached Sparta the day after leaving Athens. He was nearing the end of his journey, crossing Mount Parthenius, when he heard a voice calling: "Phidippides! Phidippides!" He

## 152 Stories from Greek History

paused, full of fear, for he knew that it was no mortal speech which was wakening the echoes on that wild mountain's side. Then he heard a rustling in the wood hard by, the boughs swayed, and parted, and before him stood the great god Pan. "Fear not, Phidippides," said the god; "I am thy friend, and the friend of them that sent thee; and I would know why they at Athens pay me neither worship nor regard, who have served them before, and would serve them again." Saying this, the vision was gone. On his return to Athens, Phidippides duly reported what he had seen and heard; and the Athenians, as soon as their affairs allowed it, built a temple to Pan, and honoured him with a yearly sacrifice and torch-race.

But at present his first concern was with the Spartans; so on he sped, his mind yet full of the god, scaled the last steep ascent, and shot like an arrow down the mountain path into the valley of the Eurotas. Breathless and travel-stained, he stood before the magistrates, and panted out his message: "Spartans, the Athenians beg you to aid them, and not to suffer the most ancient city in Greece to fall under the yoke of barbarians. Already Eretria has fallen, and Greece is poorer by one city of no mean note." Now, the Spartans were willing to help the Athenians, but they were held back by a religious scruple: that month was sacred to Apollo, and before the full moon it was not lawful for them to leave the city.

Leaving, then, the Spartans to wait for the full moon, let us go back to Athens, which is thus left to bear the brunt alone — yet not wholly alone, for as they were standing in order of battle, on a spot sacred to Hercules, a gallant little band came trooping down the mountain-side, and joined their ranks. It was the whole military force of Plataea, a little town on the borders of Attica and Boeotia, between which and Athens there was an old tie of friendship and alliance. Thus reinforced, the generals held a council of war. Their opinion was divided : five were for giving battle to the Persians without delay, and among these was Miltiades ; five were against it. Then Miltiades went to Callimachus, who by virtue of his office as polemarch voted as eleventh man with the generals, and whose decision was, therefore, all-important, and entreated him very earnestly, saying : “ Callimachus, the fate of Athens is in thy hands ; speak the word only : is she to be free or enslaved ? Now mayest thou win thee a name fairer than Harmodius and Aristogeiton. If we fight and win to-day, Athens shall be greatest among the cities of Greece. If we do not fight, there are traitors among us who are watching an occasion to betray us to the Persians. Vote, then, as one on whose voice the fate of Athens, the fate of Greece, depends.” Happily for Athens, happily for mankind, the words of Miltiades prevailed. Callimachus gave his vote for battle.

Some days passed ; at length, on the day when the chief command came round to Miltiades (for



## 154 Stories from Greek History

each of the ten generals held it in turn), he drew up his army for the fight. On the right wing Callimachus was in command; the left was occupied by the Plataeans. To prevent the risk of outflanking, the chief strength was thrown into the wings, and the centre was consequently weakened. Then there was a pause: on the slope of the hill stood that devoted little band; on the plain below were arrayed the cavalry, the archers, and the infantry of Persia, outnumbering them by ten to one. In front of the Greeks stands the priest; the victims are brought, the sacrifice is declared favourable, and the voice of the people is lifted up in prayer. Then the trumpet sounds, and loud and clear rings out the order: "Charge!" Beneath the tramp of ten thousand feet the hillside thunders and trembles; with one mighty shout the army of Athens sweeps down like a torrent on the plain below. A space of nearly a mile had to be passed before they could come to blows with the enemy; the Persians, therefore, had ample time to make their reflections, as that living flood of warriors poured on, with flash of shields and glitter of spears. "Madmen! They are rushing into the jaws of death!"—such was the proud thought of the conquerors of Asia. But they were soon undeceived: in a moment the Athenians were upon them, and down went horse and foot, bowman and slinger. On the wings the Athenians and Plataeans at once bore down all resistance, and hurled the Persians opposed to them back upon the sea;



**Miltiades**



then, facing round, they went to the support of their own centre, which, borne back by the weight and mass of the enemy, had retired inland. Here too they were victorious; and now the rout became general, and the whole Persian army was flying in wild disorder towards their ships, with the Greeks at their heels, stabbing and slaying. They reach the sea, and a desperate struggle begins on the beach. "Bring fire!" cries a Greek; and the cry is repeated: "Bring fire! Let us burn their ships, and cut them all off, these murderers, ravishers, and robbers!" But the Persians now fought with the fury of despair; and it was here that the greatest loss was incurred by the Athenians. Here fell Callimachus after fighting like a hero, and Cynegirus, the brother of the poet Æschylus, whose hand was hewn off with an axe as he took hold of the stern of a ship, and many other Athenians of note.

Seven ships fell into the hands of the Athenians; but the barbarians saved the rest, and sailed off towards Athens round Sunium, hoping to get there before the Athenian army, and take the city by surprise; for there were traitors within the walls, who had agreed with the Persians to signal to them by flashing a bright shield if the moment were favourable for an attack. But Miltiades was too quick for them. He led his army at full speed from Marathon, and encamped under the walls of Athens. Soon after the ships of Datis were seen hovering in the open waters off Phalerum; but finding the Athenian army

## 156 Stories from Greek History

ready to receive him he drew off, and set sail for Asia.

Such was the issue of the first great battle in the unending struggle between East and West, between darkness and light, slavery and freedom. And it was not only the first, but the greatest and most momentous fight, in all the long history of that contest. Had the Athenians been beaten at Marathon, Greece must have fallen under the tyranny of Persia; and had Greece thus fallen, the history of Europe, as it now is, would never have been written. Nations far different from those we know would have now been living in France, Germany, and England; and neither should I have been here to write this tale, nor would you have been here to read it.

# The Invasion of Xerxes

## I

### TO THE ARRIVAL OF XERXES AT THESSALONICA

**T**HE news of the defeat of Marathon only added fuel to the wrath of Darius. Without losing a moment, he sent round orders to every province in his vast empire to make ready for another expedition, on a much grander scale than the last. Thereupon all Asia was in a bustle and ferment of preparation for the next three years. A revolt in Egypt, which broke out in the fourth year of these preparations, did not deter him from his purpose. But the career of the lord of Asia was now drawing to its close. In the midst of his schemes of conquest and vengeance he sickened, and died, five years after Marathon, and Xerxes, his son, succeeded him on the throne.

The new monarch viewed with disfavour the intended war against Greece, and it needed all the arts of his courtiers to persuade him to carry out his father's plans. First Mardonius, his cousin, reminded him of the insults he had received from Athens, and, painting a glowing picture of the fair realms of Europe, urged him to

## 158 Stories from Greek History

add them to his empire. Then came a message from the Aleuadæ, princes of Thessaly, inviting him to invade Greece, and promising zealous support. Lastly Hippias, and others of the family of Pisistratus, who were present at Sousa, brought forward a solemn prophet, named Onomacritus, who pretended to be the keeper of the oracles of Musæus, an ancient seer. Onomacritus recited a string of oracles, which mentioned the bridging of the Hellespont \* by the Persian king, and seemed to promise success. All these beset the young king with their clamour, and turned his weak head, so that he resolved to invade Greece. Calling together his nobles, he made a long and pompous harangue, in which he reminded them of the warlike glories and conquests of the Persians. "In their footsteps," said Xerxes, "I will tread—in the footsteps of Cyrus and Darius ; nor will I rest until all Europe owns my sway, and the empire of Persia has no boundary but sea and sky." The king's eloquence was loudly applauded by Mardonius, who followed in the same strain, and spoke with contempt of the Greeks.

Then Artabanus, uncle of Xerxes, raised his voice in solemn warning against the mad words of the king and Mardonius. He recalled the rash enterprise of Darius against Scythia, which so nearly ended in his ruin. He spoke of the proved valour of the Athenians, and the crushing defeat of Datis at Marathon. Then

\* Dardanelles.

he turned to Mardonius, and said : " Cease these unworthy slanders against men better than thyself. If thou must needs lead an army against Greece, at least seek not to drag thy king with thee into peril. Go, if thou wilt, and take this warning with thee : one day a message shall come to Sousa, that dogs and vultures have eaten the flesh of Mardonius where he lay, in the land of Athens, or the land of Sparta, or perchance on his way thither ; for he learnt when it was too late what manner of men they were on whom he made war." But Xerxes was now in the full flow of vanity and pride, and he answered Artabanus with anger and contempt, bidding him stay at home with the women, and leave thoughts of war and conquest to stouter hearts.

But with the night came cooler counsels, and again that feeble monarch swung back like a pendulum to the side of caution and prudence. He resolved to follow the advice of Artabanus, and give up his plans against Greece. Then he fell asleep, and while he slept it seemed to him that a man of great stature and comely presence stood by him, and said : " Son of Darius, thou dost ill to change thy purpose ; thou dost ill, and I will not suffer it ; proceed with thy design, and waver not."

In spite of this vision Xerxes summoned his nobles at daybreak, and told them that he had changed his mind ; and they rejoiced when they heard it, and bowed down before the king with words of thanks and gratitude. But again



## 160 Stories from Greek History

in the night that followed, the same vision appeared to Xerxes, and an awful voice smote upon his ears: "Thou hast set my words at naught, and I am as nothing to thee. Now, I tell thee again, flinch not from the work which thou hast taken in hand, for, if thou go back now, in the twinkling of an eye all thy greatness shall be humbled in the dust." Full of fear at this second warning Xerxes sprang from his bed, ran to Artabanus, and told him all that had happened. 'Now, I would learn,' said Xerxes, "if this be really a message from God or not. If it be from God, then the same dream will appear unto thee. And that this may the better come to pass, thou shalt put on my royal robes, and sit on my throne, and afterwards sleep on my bed."

Artabanus was at first inclined to make light of his nephew's fears, but, carried away by his earnestness, he complied. Arrayed in the royal purple he sat on Xerxes' throne, and afterwards went to bed on the couch from which Xerxes had risen. After a time he fell asleep, and a third time that solemn figure stood by the bed, and spoke in angry tones: "So thou art the man who would persuade Xerxes from his purpose, in thy pretended care for him? What shall be his fate if he listens to thee, he knows. Now receive thou thy reward for seeking to turn aside the course of fate"—and, saying this, the vision was about to burn out the eyes of the sleeper with red-hot irons. Roused by the terror of his dream, Artabanus shrieked aloud, and awoke; and, being at last convinced

## The Invasion of Xerxes 161

that the invasion of Greece was divinely appointed, he advised Xerxes to impart to his council the Heaven-sent message, and push on his warlike preparations with all speed.

All doubt and hesitation were now at an end, and the whole wealth and the whole power of the huge empire were taxed to the uttermost to raise such an army and fleet as would make all resistance hopeless. And now you must hear of yet another dream which visited Xerxes when he was on the point of starting ; for dreams, the ministers of folly, were the fit attendants on such a mind and such an undertaking. And this was the dream : Xerxes thought that his head was crowned with a wreath of olive, and the olive shoots grew and spread until they overshadowed the whole earth. The Magi, to whom he told his dream, saw in it a sign that the whole earth, and all her sons, should bow the neck to Xerxes as lord.

During four years from the death of Darius the work of preparation went on. Not the least part of it was the cutting of a canal through the isthmus which joins the peninsula of Athos to the mainland. Already a Persian fleet, which was sent under Mardonius, three years before Marathon, against Greece, had been wrecked off that stormy headland ; and this is why it was determined to cut through the isthmus, in order to avoid the dangerous passage round the cape. A great host was set to work, and they began to dig, with overseers standing over them, to assist their

## 162 Stories from Greek History

labours with the lash. As the trench grew deeper scaffolds were erected, tier above tier, on which stood men to hand up the soil in baskets as it was dug out. Now, most of the diggers were foolish, for they made the sides of the trench perpendicular, so that when it grew deep they were constantly delayed by the soil falling in. But the Phœnicians had the wit, when they began digging, to make the trench in the part allotted to them double the width required, gradually narrowing it as they proceeded; thus the sides were sloping, and did not fall in. Three years were occupied in this task, and the canal was made broad enough for three triremes to row abreast. Stores of provisions were brought, and laid up at convenient spots on the line of march.

Meanwhile another great work was in progress—the bridging of the Hellespont. Beginning from Abydos, on the Asiatic shore, the Phœnicians and Egyptians, to whom this task was assigned, threw two bridges, joined with cables, across the strait to a point between Sestos and Madytus. The distance is nearly a mile. The work was hardly finished when a violent storm arose, and scattered the whole fabric. Perhaps the sea-god was angry at the yoke thus laid upon him—but not more angry than Xerxes when he heard of it. He fell into a fit of truly childish fury, and sent orders to flog the Hellespont with three hundred lashes, and sink a set of fetters into his waters. And those who flogged the waves were ordered to utter these words as they laid on the lash: “O

bitter water, my master punishes thee thus, because thou hast wronged him, having suffered no wrong at his hands ; and Xerxes the king will pass over thee, whether thou wilt have it or not. No man offers sacrifice to thee ; and rightly so, thou treacherous and briny river." \* Having thus vented his rage on the river, he next gave orders to cut off the heads of the master builders who had designed the bridges. Others were at once appointed to this dangerous office, and with such a warning before them they were not likely to be careless of their work. Two lines of galleys—three hundred and sixty for the eastern bridge, and three hundred and fourteen for the other—were moored by huge anchors lengthways to the current. Across these great cables were stretched, six to each line of vessels, and drawn taut by capstans on either shore. Each yard of cable weighed a hundredweight. Then beams of wood were laid in order on the cables, and firmly fastened from above ; on the beams brushwood was piled, and over the brushwood was laid a layer of earth, firmly trodden in. On either side rose a high bulwark, lest the horses and baggage-mules should take fright at the sight of the sea.

All was now ready for an advance on Greece, and Xerxes set out with his host from Sardis at the beginning of the spring, and marched towards Abydos. Just at this time there occurred a total eclipse of the sun, and this event was interpreted

\* The Hellespont was regarded in early times as a river; Hence Homer speaks of it as " the *broad* Hellespont."

## 164 Stories from Greek History

by the Magi as a sign that the Greeks were about to abandon their cities. Hearing this, Xerxes was glad at heart, thinking that Heaven was ordering all things to his will.

Among those about the king's person was a certain Pythius, a Lydian of enormous wealth, who had entertained Xerxes and his whole army at his own cost, and now stood high in the king's favour. This Pythius had five sons, all serving in the army of Xerxes, and the recent eclipse had filled him with dark forebodings. So he went to Xerxes, confident in his favour, and said : " Master, I would ask of thee a boon, which is a small thing for thee to give, but a great thing for me to receive." " Ask, and it shall be granted thee," answered Xerxes, little suspecting the nature of the request. Then Pythius took courage, and said : " Pity my grey hairs, O king, and grant that of my five sons one may be left to comfort my old age and guard my possessions." Nothing so stirred the jealous temper of a tyrant as a request like this ; any hint of something less than total and absolute devotion to his service was sure to provoke some act of horrible cruelty. Xerxes overwhelmed the wretched father with a torrent of bitter anger, and calling an officer, gave him an order. The officer went, and sought out the eldest of the sons of Pythius. Then those whose business it was took the youth, and slew him, and dividing his body into two halves, laid one on one side, and one on the other side, of the way by which the army was to march.

## The Invasion of Xerxes 165

Through these ghastly emblems of tyranny now moved the mighty host in long procession. First came the train of baggage-animals, and after that a mingled multitude of various nations, making about one half of the army. Then a space was left, so that this nameless rabble might not approach the person of the king. A thousand picked horsemen headed the second group of the procession. After these paced ten sacred steeds from the Nisæan plain of Media, and the sacred car of Ormuzd, the supreme deity of the Persians, was drawn behind them by eight white horses, whose driver walks behind holding the reins ; for no mortal may set foot on that car. Following the car of Ormuzd was a second chariot, drawn by Nisæan horses, and driven by one of the noblest of the Persians ; and by the driver sits one of regal port, Xerxes, son of Darius, king of kings, and lord of all Asia. Him followed close a thousand spearmen on foot, the bravest and noblest in Persia, holding their spears erect, and a thousand chosen cavalry. Next in order marched a choice troop of ten thousand infantry, their lances, which were held reversed, shod with pomegranates of silver and gold ; these were called the Immortals, because their number was always the same, and when one fell his place was at once filled up. Ten thousand cavalry closed this second group, the kernel of the whole army, whose centre was Xerxes. Then, at an interval of about a quarter of a mile, the other half of the main body followed.

## 166 Stories from Greek History

Marching in this order they entered the sacred land of Troy ; and as they lay for the night under Mount Ida a furious storm, with thunder and lightning, fell upon them, and many of them perished. Advancing thence, they came to the little River Scamander, of which Homer sings ; and Scamander's waters sufficed not for the needs of those unnumbered millions, but ran dry in their bed. Here Xerxes visited the site of Troy, and having ascended Pergamus, the ancient citadel of Priam, offered a sacrifice of a thousand oxen. And so they went until they reached Abydos, the place where the bridge was made. At the command of Xerxes a throne of white marble had been raised in a position affording a view over the surrounding country. The king climbed the ascent, and sat down on the throne. He cast his eyes around, and saw beneath him the two wondrous bridges, and the waters of the Hellespont swarming with ships, and heard the air filled with the shouts of the busy multitude. Then he turned his gaze shoreward, and all the shore, as far as his eye could reach, was black with the countless host. And his heart swelled with joy and pride, as he thought that all this mighty armament called him lord. But suddenly his thoughts changed, the proud light left his eyes, and he wept. Those who were near him asked the reason for this quick turn from joy to grief : " Alas ! " he answered, " out of all these millions not one will be living a hundred years from now ! "

## The Invasion of Xerxes 167

Dawn is just breaking over the waters of the Hellespont, and the whole host of Persia is waiting in awed silence for the coming of the god of day. On the bridges many hands are busy, burning offerings of incense, and strewing the way with myrtle boughs. As the first rays shoot across the waters Xerxes takes a golden bowl, and, pouring drink-offerings into the sea, lifts up his voice in prayer. "God of my fathers," he cries, "let naught arise to stay my path until I have set foot as a conqueror on the farthest verge of Europe." Thus having said, he flung the cup into the sea, and after it a golden mixing-bowl and a Persian scimitar. Whether these were offerings to the sun, or gifts of atonement to the Hellespont, we cannot say. Sacrifice and prayer ended, the great passage of the Hellespont began. The infantry and cavalry crossed by the eastern bridge, the baggage-train by the western. Seven days and seven nights that living stream poured unceasingly from Asia into Europe. The names alone of the nations who made up the motley host would fill a page of this book—Medes and Persians, Assyrians and Chaldæans, Indians and Parthians, Egyptians, Arabians, and Ethiopians, and a hundred more. Almost every known race of mankind, and every degree of civilisation and savagery, were represented there, from the gallant nobles of Persia, second to none in valour and warlike skill, to the rude natives of the Upper Nile, clothed in lion and panther skins, and armed with clubs and stone-headed arrows, who daubed their bodies,



## 168 Stories from Greek History

when they went into battle, with chalk and red ochre—such was the word of power which had called up these and other wild denizens from the uttermost parts of the earth.

At length the whole army had passed over in safety, and marching first in an easterly direction doubled the Bay of Melas, then, wheeling round, moved westward, until they came to Doriscus, a town on the Hebrus, in Thrace. Here the army was numbered and reviewed; and the manner of numbering it was this: ten thousand men were drawn up together, and packed as tightly as possible; round these a line was drawn, and after they had been dismissed the space where they had stood was fenced with a low wall; then the whole army was marched in detachments into this enclosure. The number of the infantry was seventeen hundred thousand, that of the cavalry eighty thousand. The fleet, which followed the army along the coast, numbered twelve hundred triremes, manned by Phoenicians, Egyptians, and the Greeks from the islands and coasts of Asia.

When the muster was complete Xerxes mounted a chariot, and drove slowly along the line, and afterwards, entering a ship of Sidon, and sitting under a golden canopy, he reviewed his fleet. Much elated by that brave show, he called Demaratus, formerly King of Sparta, now banished by the malice of his enemies, and living in exile on the bounty of the Persian king; and when he was come Xerxes asked Demaratus if the Greeks would

attempt to oppose him. "For it seems to me," said the king, "that if all the nations in Europe were to gather against me, they must suffer defeat, having no common master to keep them together. How, then, can the Greeks, who are so few in number, and yet will suffer no command, make any stand against this enormous host?" Demaratus replied: "O king, the Greeks are nursed in poverty, trained in the manly school of hardship and obedience. With them liberty is not licence, for they have a master whose name is Law. They love their hard and barren land, and will defend her with their blood. As for the Spartans, I love them not, for they have cast me out, and made me an exile and a beggar; yet be thou assured of this, that, rather than suffer so much as the thought of bondage to enter their minds, they will suffer themselves to be cut off to the last man." Xerxes laughed gaily, and was quite pleased with Demaratus, as a most entertaining fellow.

Passing through Thrace, they came to the River Strymon, a broad stream, which had been bridged for the passage of the army. The Magi sacrificed white horses to the river, and coming to a place called Nine Ways they buried alive there nine sons and nine daughters of the inhabitants. They now entered Greek territory, and passed Stagirus, afterwards famous as the birthplace of Aristotle. Here Xerxes dismissed the fleet, with orders to sail into the Gulf of Thessalonica, and await him there. On the march he had brought more than one city to the brink of ruin by graciously consent-

## 170 Stories from Greek History

ing to dine at its expense. The cost of one such meal was ninety-six thousand pounds sterling of our money. Preparations were made months before ; vast stores of meal were laid up, with fat cattle, and poultry in thousands, and costly delicacies, and rare wines. A splendid pavilion was erected for the use of Xerxes and his courtiers, with vessels of silver and gold. When the feast was over the attendants of the king pulled up the tent-poles, and carried off tent, furniture, gold and silver vessels, and all. A certain wit of Abdera, one of the cities which entertained these terrible guests, advised his fellow-citizens to go in a body to the temples, and give thanks to the gods that Xerxes did not dine twice in a day. "Two such dinners," he said, "and there would be nothing left for us to eat !"

Leaving the sea, Xerxes and the land force marched inland in a direct line for Thessalonica. During this portion of the route the camels which accompanied the army were attacked by lions. When they reached Thessalonica they found the fleet already at anchor in the bay, and pitched their camp on the shore within sight of the snowy peaks of Olympus and Ossa.

## II

## EVENTS IN GREECE

**I**T is time to return to the Greeks. What are their thoughts while this black storm of war is still gathering in the East against the temples and homes of Greece? From Thessaly to Boeotia, with few exceptions, all have submitted to the king. Among the rest, many are ready to play the traitor at the first opportunity, and nearly all are filled with terror and dismay. Even the common god of Greece, the fair young god of Delphi, seemed to be infected by the general panic; for when the Athenians sent to his oracle for a word of comfort and counsel this was the answer which they heard, striking a note of despair:

“Away, ye wretched men, and fly to earth’s extremest bound!

Leave hearth and home, and fence of walls that rings your city round!

On every stone, and every beam, a woeful ruin waits,  
And Fear sits robed in blood and fire, to warn you from your gates.

Across the land in Syrian car shall wrathful Ares sweep,

And many a tower, not thine alone, shall lie a smoking heap.

Lo, in their shrines the trembling gods in whom ye put your trust

Await the shock which soon shall lay their temples in the dust.

## 172 Stories from Greek History

Hope naught from me! My day is done; now  
comes the dreadful night:

Let grief have way, and bow your heads to Fate's  
unpitying might."

When they heard this answer the messengers from Athens were filled with sorrow and dismay. Even the god seemed to have forsaken them. While they stood there, heart-broken by that terrible response to their prayers, one of the Delphians, named Timon, a man of high note in his own city, came up to them, and said: "Do not give way to despair; perhaps the god is tempting you. Take boughs of olive, and go back as suppliants to the oracle, and maybe you will hear a better answer." So the Athenians went back, and said: "O king, have pity on our supplication, and speak some word of better hope for our country; for if we can carry home no fairer message than this we will never leave thy shrine, but will remain here till we die." Then the priestess spoke again:

"Athene's prayers, Athene's tears, are wasted all in  
vain;

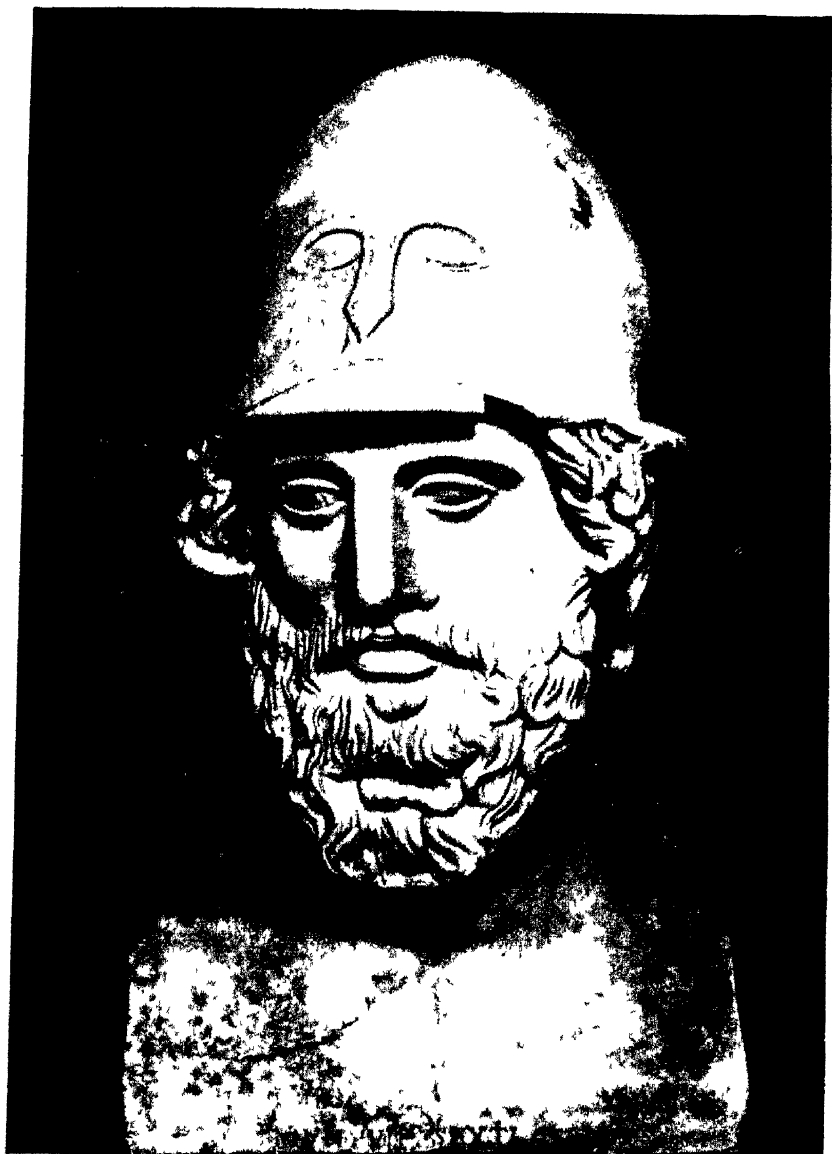
The Olympian Sire sits all unmoved; he will not  
heed her pain.

Yet hearken still another word, and take it for thy  
weal,

A word as sure as bands of iron, a word beyond  
repeal:

When all things else the foeman holds, and naught  
is left to thee,

Between Cithæron's rocky brow, and Sunium's purple  
sea.



Themistocles

By permission of D. Anderson, Rome



## The Invasion of Xerxes 173

A wooden wall the Sire has given against the fierce  
attack,  
To shield thee and thy little ones, and hurl the  
Persian back.  
Fly from the host of horse and foot, and deem it not  
disgrace ;  
A happier hour shall see thee stand, and meet him  
face to face.  
O Salamis, thy glorious name full many a mother  
grieves,  
Or when they scatter wide the seed, or bind the  
golden sheaves." \*

As those words seemed less hopeless than the first oracle they were written down, and brought back to Athens. Here a great debate arose as to the meaning of the allusion to the " wooden wall," and the import of the last words about Salamis. Some of the elder men supposed that the citadel was the wooden wall, as it was fenced with a hedge of thorn ; others referred the words to the Athenian navy, though here again they were troubled by the closing lines, which seemed to forbode defeat ; and this opinion was supported by the prophets, whose business it was to study and interpret the meanings of oracles. These last would not hear of resistance to Xerxes, but bade the Athenians abandon Attica, and seek a home in another land.

But there was one strong and clear-sighted man who refused to listen to these base counsels of terror. This was Themistocles, the saviour and second founder of Athens. His wisdom and

\* Either in seedtime, or at harvest-home.



## 174 Stories from Greek History

foresight had been conspicuously shown on a former occasion. A great sum of money had come into the public treasury from the silver mines of Laurium, which were owned by the Athenian state. It was proposed to distribute this wealth among the citizens ; but by the advice of Themistocles it was resolved to employ the money in building a fleet of two hundred triremes, to be used against Ægina, with which island Athens was then at war. And now Themistocles rose up to give courage and energy to those fainting hearts and wavering minds. "It seems to me," he said, "that the prophets have not read the oracle aright, for observe, the words are 'O Salamis, thy *glorious* name.' Now, if the god had been referring to a defeat of the Greeks, he would have said 'thy *dreadful* name,' or something in that sense. No ! it is the Persian mothers who will weep at the name of Salamis, not the mothers of Greeks. By the 'wooden walls' it is plain that our ships are meant. Prepare, then, to meet the Persians on the sea." And the advice of Themistocles was taken.

Those of the Greeks who were resolved to resist the Persians now bound themselves together by a solemn oath, and, hearing that Xerxes was mustering his host at Sardis, they sent spies to learn the force of the Persian army. These spies fell into the hands of Xerxes' generals, who were about to put them to death ; but Xerxes ordered them to be sent back to Greece, thinking that their report would strike terror into the hearts of their

countrymen. Similarly, when he was told that Greek merchantmen were sailing down the Hellespont, bound for Greece with a freight of corn, he laughed, and said: "Let them pass; they are carrying corn for me and my army."

Envoys were now sent by the confederate Greeks to Argos, Sicily, Corcyra, and Crete, in the hope of raising a great coalition of the whole Greek world against the invader. But all these with one consent began to make excuses. Gelo, the Tyrant of Syracuse, at this time the greatest and most powerful of the Greek cities, was at this very moment engaged in a tremendous struggle with the Phœnicians of Carthage. Argos, the second city of Peloponnesus, was jealous of the greatness of Sparta, and was strongly suspected of having a secret understanding with Persia. The Corcyreans acted after their kind—that is, like treacherous and cunning knaves. They met the envoys with fair words, spoke of the common fatherland, and promised aid. But when the time came they manned sixty triremes, and sailing as far as Cape Malea, in Southern Peloponnesus, there moored their ships, and lay waiting for the event. When the battle was decided they excused themselves by saying that they were detained by adverse winds. The Cretans refused outright, alleging an oracle which forbade them to take part against the Persians. Thus it was but a small fraction of the Greek world which bore an active part in the great struggle for the common liberty of Greeks.

## 176 Stories from Greek History

At the moment when Xerxes was encamped at Abydos, waiting to pass over into Europe, envoys arrived from Thessaly at the Isthmus of Corinth, where the General Council of the Greek patriots was sitting. For the Thessalians, as yet, had not joined the Persians, but disapproved of the treason of the Aleuadae.\* Accordingly, they offered to share in defending the Pass of Tempe, in Northern Thessaly, if the other Greeks would send a strong force to support them. It was resolved to accept this offer, and ten thousand heavy-armed infantry were despatched under Themistocles, and Evænetus, a Spartan. They were joined by a force of Thessalian cavalry, and lay encamped under Olympus for a few days. Then a message came from Alexander, King of Macedon, warning them that if they remained they would be trampled underfoot by the countless host of Xerxes. At the same time they became aware that there was another pass leading into Thessaly, more towards the west. For these reasons the position was abandoned, and the Thessalians now threw themselves without reserve on the side of Xerxes.

The time is growing short ; Xerxes has reached the borders of Thessaly, and soon the tide of invasion will pour down the mountain passes into Greece. What shall be the first line of defence ? And where shall be found hearts stout enough to meet the first shock of invasion ? There is a wild and lonely spot, just opposite the northern

\* See p. 158.

point of Eubœa, where the eastern spurs of the great mountain mass of Cœta leave a narrow strip of level land between themselves and the sea. Its name is Thermopylæ—that is, the Hot Springs—and it is the ordinary entrance from Thessaly into Southern Greece. Here it was resolved to make the first stand, and a force of three hundred Spartans, with a mixed body of other troops, numbering, in all, about five thousand, was sent to defend the pass. At the same time the fleet left its station at the isthmus, and sailed northward to Artemisium, on the northern coast of Eubœa, opposite Thermopylæ. At this moment a message came from Delphi, which brought some comfort in that hour of terror. The Delphians had questioned the god, for themselves and the other Greeks, and had received this answer: “Pray to the Winds: they will be your mightiest helpers.”

### III

#### THERMOPYLÆ

THREE ships were sent forward by the Greeks from Artemisium, and took up their position at Sciathus, to watch the movements of the Persian fleet. When the vanguard of the enemy hove in sight they retired towards the main body of the Greek ships. One of them, a vessel of Trœzen, fell into the

## 178 Stories from Greek History

hands of the Phœnicians ; and they, struck by the beauty of a certain Leo, one of the fighting men on the captured ship, led him to the forepart of the vessel, and slaughtered him as a sacrifice to their god and the first-fruits of victory. The second ship, from Ægina, was also taken. One of her fighting men made such a desperate defence that he was covered with wounds ; at last he fell, and the Persians who fought on the Phœnician ships, finding him still breathing, made great efforts to save his life, laying myrrh to his wounds, and swathing him in fine linen, so much were they moved by his valour. The third ship, which was from Athens, escaped to the mouth of the Peneus, which flows through the valley of Tempe, and there the crew ran her aground, and made their way on foot to Athens. Meanwhile fireships from Sciathus had warned the Greek fleet of the Persians' advance. Panic-stricken, they left their position at Artemisium, and drew back on Chalcis, just where the channel is narrowest, between Eubœa and the mainland.

The whole body of the Persian armada now weighed anchor, and sailing southward, chose for their station an open and exposed beach on the south-east shore of Thessaly, near Cape Sepias. It was the scene of the wooing of Thetis, a sea-goddess, mother of Achilles, by Peleus ; and the name, signifying "cuttle-fish," recalled one of the shapes assumed by Thetis in her efforts to escape from her lover. The spot was ill-chosen, for the narrowness of the beach allowed only a

small proportion of the ships to be drawn up on shore; the rest rode at anchor, huddled together in an unwieldy mass. Next day a terrible storm arose, and wrought dire havoc among the Persian ships. Those near the shore were able to haul their vessels out of the reach of the waves; but the rest were exposed to the full fury of the gale, which lasted three days and three nights, and at least four hundred were wrecked. The whole coast was strewn with wreckage, and a Greek who lived near the spot, named Ameinocles, amassed great riches by picking up the vessels of silver and gold and the treasure-chests which had been cast up by the sea.

The Greeks lying in their safe anchorage at Chalcis heard the roaring of the tempest, and rejoiced. An oracle had lately bidden them call their son-in-law to their aid; and now they understood that Boreas was meant, the bluff god of the north wind, who had wedded a daughter of Attica—Oreithyia. So they called aloud to Boreas, and prayed him to destroy the ships of their enemy. At Sepias the Magi were likewise busy with sacrifice and prayer; chanting magic spells, and slaughtering victims, they strove to appease the fury of the wind; nor did they forget to add the names of Thetis and her sea-nymphs to their petition. On the fourth day the storm wore itself out.

Informed by scouts from Eubœa of the destruction of the Persian ships, the Greeks now returned to their original position at Artemisium,

## 180 Stories from Greek History

and the Persians about the same time left the scene of their late disaster, and doubling the headland of Magnesia, came to an anchor at Aphetæ, in the land-locked Gulf of Pagasæ, named from the launching and building of the Argo. Fifteen vessels of the Persian fleet, which had set sail after the departure of the rest, mistook the Greek ships at Artemisium for those of their own side, and the Greeks, seeing their error, sailed out, and easily captured them. The commander of this little squadron, Sandoces, a Greek, had a strange history. Being convicted of giving false judgment for bribes, he was sentenced by Darius to be crucified, and the sentence was carried out. While he was hanging on the cross Darius, reviewing the life of Sandoces, came to the conclusion that the good things which he had done were greater than the evil; so he ordered him to be taken down, and Sandoces lived to fall into the hands of his countrymen at Artemisium.

Leaving the fleet, we now take up the fortunes of the land forces. Xerxes is encamped with all his host at the very mouth of the Pass of Thermopylæ. Here was posted the little force, the advance guard of the Grecian army, commanded by Leonidas, King of Sparta. It was the time of the Olympian festival, and it was hoped that Leonidas would be able to hold the pass until the festival was over, and the main army could come to his support. The Spartans themselves were busy at home with their own national festival to Apollo; but they sent Leonidas on in advance,

fearing that if they waited without doing anything their allies would throw down their arms.

At the approach of the Persians those of the Greek force who came from Peloponnesus took alarm, and proposed to draw back upon the isthmus. But Leonidas refused to abandon the allies, whose lands would thus be left open to invaders ; it was, therefore, decided to stay, and send urgent messages for support.

Xerxes had heard, while still in Thessaly, that a force of Spartans, under Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, was waiting to oppose him at Thermopylæ, and, being now encamped but a little way off, he sent a horseman to see how many the Spartans were, and what they were doing. When the horseman rode up he found the entrance defended by a wall, so that he could not see those who were inside the pass ; but outside the wall he saw a small troop of Spartans, who were taking their turn at outpost duty, and some of them were at their exercises, while others were combing their long hair.\* They took not the least notice of him, so when he had gazed his fill he rode back, and told what he had seen.

On hearing his report Xerxes was sorely puzzled, not knowing what to make of it. He called Demaratus, the exiled King of Sparta, and asked what it meant ; and Demaratus answered ; " I have told thee before, O king, what manner of men the Spartans are ; and now I tell thee again. These men have come



## 182 Stories from Greek History

to defend the pass against us ; and it is their custom when about to run into peril of their lives to dress their heads. And know this, O king, that if thou canst conquer these men, and those who are left in Sparta, there will be none left to raise a hand against thee ; for in Sparta is the noblest of monarchies, and the noblest of men are the Spartans." But his words seemed to Xerxes as idle tales, and he would not believe them. Four days he waited, expecting that the Greeks would run away ; on the fifth day, finding them still there, and thinking that they remained in sheer folly and wanton insolence, he sent some of his choicest troops, with orders to take them alive, and bring them into his presence. And these, being Medes and Cissians, charged down upon the Greeks. Many of them were slain ; but others took their places, and a stubborn fight was kept up all day. Then it was made plain to the king that many are soldiers, but few are men. When these were beaten off the king ordered the very flower of his army, the Immortals,\* to take up the task. These fared no better than the Medes ; for in the narrow space they had no advantage from their numbers, and the spears which they used were shorter than those of the Greeks. The military habits and lifelong drill of the Spartans now stood them in good stead ; they fought with the Persians like seasoned veterans against raw recruits ; and sometimes they would feign flight, tempting the barbarians to pursue them—then,

\* P. 165.

as the barbarians came on with wild cries and uproar, they wheeled round, and cut them down by hundreds. Again and again the Persians returned to the assault ; again and again they were hurled back with heavy loss. Xerxes, who sat watching the struggle, was seen to leap three times from his throne, in fear for his army. At last night fell, and for that time the bitter fray was at an end. Next day the Persians, supposing that the Greeks, being so few, must be worn out with wounds and toil, returned to the attack ; but, finding as warm a welcome as the day before, they retired.

And now we have to tell of an act of treason—the blackest, perhaps, in all the annals of mankind. There was a certain Ephialtes, a Greek, native of this district, and well acquainted with the mountain paths : this man came to Xerxes, and offered to lead his army round by another way, behind the position of the Greeks at Thermopylæ. Xerxes joyfully accepted the offer, and sent Hydarnes and the Immortals, with orders to take the route pointed out by Ephialtes, a steep and rugged track, leading out in the rear of the Greek position. Setting out at sundown, they toiled all night up the rocky way, and reached the summit as day was breaking. It chanced that a thousand Phocians were keeping watch over this path, which gives access to the territory of Phocis. It was a still, windless morning, and suddenly they heard the tramping of many feet crashing through the dead leaves of the oak

## 184 Stories from Greek History

forest which clothed the whole mountain. They ran to their arms, and at the same moment the Persians appeared. Great was the astonishment of Hydarnes, and no less his alarm, at finding himself face to face with an armed force ; for he supposed them to be Spartans. Learning from Ephialtes his mistake, he drew up his men for battle. The Phocians, being assailed by a shower of arrows, fled to a neighbouring hill, and prepared to sell their lives dearly ; but the Persians, taking no further notice of them, continued their march, and began to descend the mountain.

The position of the Greeks at Thermopylæ was now desperate. They were not without warning of the approaching peril. First the prophet Megistias, after inspecting the victims, foretold their death ; then they heard of the march of Hydarnes from deserters and from their own scouts. Leonidas dismissed all his allies, excepting four hundred Thebans, whom he kept with him as hostages, and seven hundred Thespians, who refused to go. He himself determined to remain, with his three hundred Spartans ; for retreat, to a Spartan, no matter from what numbers, meant disgrace utter and irretrievable : he must conquer or die—there was no other way. And an ancient oracle had told the Spartans that either their city or their king should fall by the hand of the Persians. With him remained also the prophet Megistias.

Xerxes waited to begin the last attack until about nine in the morning, so as to give those with

## The Invasion of Xerxes 185

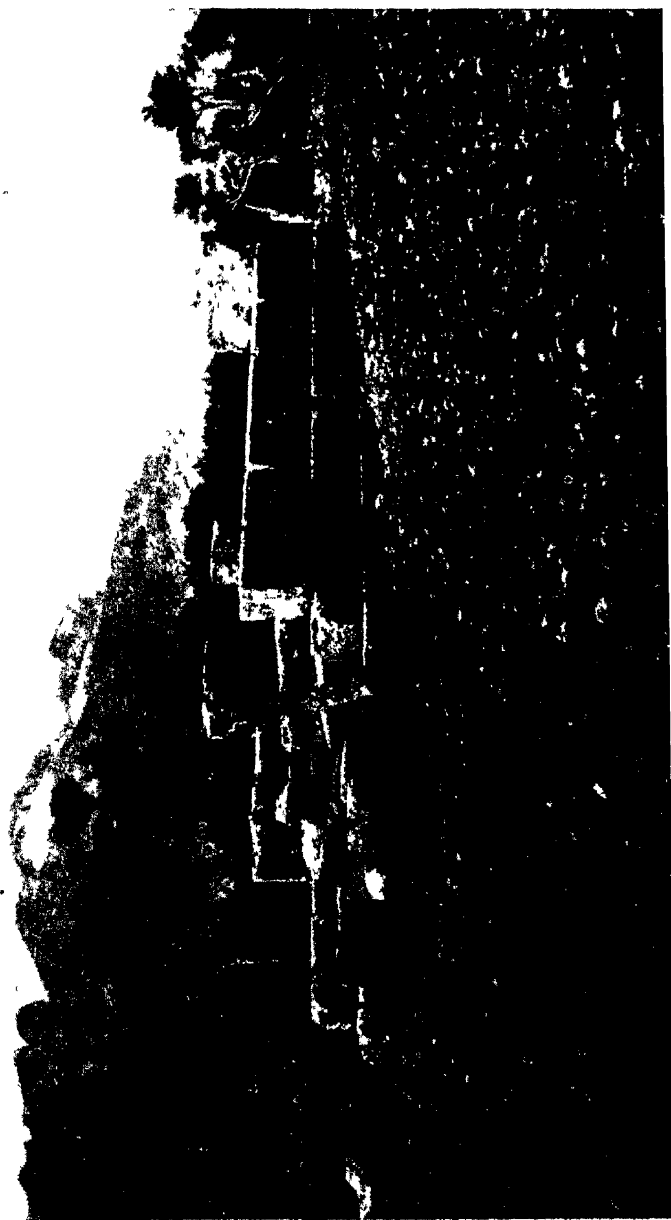
Hydarnes time to arrive and take the Greeks in the rear. Hitherto the Greeks had fought with caution, keeping in the narrow part of the pass, and sheltering themselves behind the wall, but now they cared not for such precautions, knowing that their doom was sealed. Forth from their line of defence sallied that little band of heroes ; on came the huge host of fighting slaves, driven on to the points of the Spartan spears by the weight of myriads pressing behind, where the officers stood urging them on with the lash. Hundreds were trampled to death, or thrust into the sea, by their own comrades. And so the carnage continued, until most of the Spartan spears were broken, and they began to use their swords. At last Leonidas fell, and over his body the battle raged afresh. Four times the Persians were repulsed, and the Spartans rescued the body of their king. Suddenly a shout was heard in the rear, and Hydarnes and the ten thousand came pouring in through the other end of the pass. Then the Spartans knew that their last hour was come ; they retired to a little hillock in the mouth of the pass, and stood waiting for death. Round them surged the yelling multitudes of cowardly foes, plying them with arrows, javelins, and stones. Still they fought on, while breath remained in their bodies ; then one by one they sank down, under the storm of iron, and at last nothing was left of all that matchless band but a motionless heap.

## 186 Stories from Greek History

"Of those who at Thermopylæ were slain,  
Glorious the doom, and beautiful the lot;  
Their tomb an altar men from tears refrain  
To honour them, and praise, but mourn them not.  
Such sepulchre, nor drear decay  
Not all-destroying time shall waste; this right have  
they.  
Within their grave the home-bred glory  
Of Greece was laid: this witness gives  
Leonidas the Spartan, in whose story  
A wreath of famous virtue ever lives." \*

One or two anecdotes are told in connection with the battle of Thermopylæ which are worth repeating, as illustrating the Spartan character. A Greek of the district, which is called Trachis, tried to excite the fears of one of the Spartans by telling him that the clouds of Persian arrows would darken the sun. "So much the better," answered the Spartan; "we shall fight in the shade." Two other Spartans, named Eurytus and Aristodemus, had been left in a neighbouring village, suffering from a severe complaint of the eyes. Eurytus, when he heard that Hydarnes was on the way to attack Leonidas in the rear, called for his arms, ordered his servant to lead him to the battlefield (for he was blind), and perished with the three hundred. But Aristodemus remained. On his return to Sparta he found himself shunned by his equals, and pointed at as a dishonoured man; he was branded with a shameful name, the most hateful to Spartan ears, that of "runaway." We shall hear of him again.

\* Translated from Simonides by John Sterling.





The four hundred Thebans, who had been retained against their will by Leonidas, for a time fought under compulsion against the Persians. But when the Spartans drew up on the hill to make their last stand they held up their hands, and surrendered, crying out that they were friends of the king, and had only fought under compulsion against him. Their cowardice and treason were fitly rewarded: some of them were cut down by the Persians, the remainder were branded by order of Xerxes with the royal brand, which marked them as slaves and chattels of the king.

The marble statue of a lion afterwards marked the spot where the three hundred fell. On it was engraved these words, supposed to be spoken by the lion:

“A lion thou wast, in deed as well as name;  
Therefore I watch thy tomb, and guard the fame.”

## IV

### ARTEMISIUM

**W**E left the Greek fleet at Artemisium watching the movements of the Persians at Aphetæ. When they saw the vast force of the Persian armada, still outnumbering their own fleet by three to one, the leaders of the Greeks made ready to fly. Then the Eubœans came to Eurybiades, the Spartan admiral, and commander-in-chief of the



## 188 Stories from Greek History

fleet, and begged him to remain until they had time to bestow their families and household possessions in a place of safety. Eurybiades refused, and the Eubœans now turned to Themistocles, to whom they brought golden arguments. Thirty talents was the price for which he agreed to keep the Greek vessels at Artemisium, and fight there for the defence of Eubœa. Of these he gave five talents to Eurybiades, and three to Adeimantus, the Corinthian admiral. Then they too agreed to stay, and persuaded the others.

When the Persians at Aphetæ saw the Greek fleet lying off Artemisium they were glad, and began to devise means to capture them all. "Not a man of them shall escape us," they said. Full of this valiant purpose they refrained that day from an open attack, lest the Greeks should fly before them, and escape. Meanwhile they sent two hundred of their swiftest vessels to sail round Eubœa, double its southern cape, and entering the channel at its southern end, thus cut off the retreat of the Greeks.

There was in the Persian naval camp a certain Scyllias, a Greek, and a most skilful diver. This Scyllias had long been waiting for an opportunity to desert ; and at last, seeing his chance, he dived into the sea, swam under water until he was clear of the Persian fleet, and then, rising to the surface, struck out manfully for Artemisium. Ten long miles that strong swimmer held on, and reaching the Greek station in safety, brought tidings of the despatch of the two hundred ships round Eubœa.

Then it was resolved to remain there that day, and after midnight to sail against those two hundred. Hour after hour went by, and still no movement was made against them.

At last, as the day was wearing on towards evening, the Greeks decided to begin the attack upon the main Persian fleet, and try how the barbarians fought. Seeing how few they were the Persians thought they must be mad, and extending their line crescent-wise, began to close them round, thinking to make them an easy prey. Of the Ionians who served under Xerxes some were sad when they saw their kinsmen hemmed in, and doomed, as they thought, to certain destruction ; others rejoiced, and strove keenly one with another which should be the first to take an Athenian ship. The Greeks drew their ships up in a circle, presenting their prows all round to the enemy ; the signal rang out, and the battle began. Thirty ships of the enemy fell into the hands of the Greeks, and they held their ground until night put an end to the encounter. Great was the amazement of the barbarians at finding themselves so rudely handled. Another surprise awaited them. In the night a heavy storm burst upon them ; the rain fell in torrents, swelling the mountain streams, and flooding their camp. The sea rose, and sweeping the wreckage and dead bodies to the shore at Aphetæ, dashed them against the ships, breaking their oars. The thunder roared and the lightning flashed from the rugged crags of Pelion, adding the last touch

## 190 Stories from Greek History

to their terror. Three days' tempest, a fierce battle, and now a second tempest! What was to be the end of it?

But if the Persians at Aphetæ were in a sorry plight, how fared the two hundred ships sailing round Eubœa? Caught in the open sea by the storm, lost in the darkness, they were hurled against the cliffs of Eubœa, and not a ship nor a man survived. Not in vain had the Greeks called the Winds to their aid and the Athenians offered sacrifice to Boreas.

Next day the Greeks were reinforced by fifty-three Attic ships, and, encouraged by the news of the loss of the two hundred Persian vessels, they openly attacked the enemy, and destroyed some of his ships. Then at last the Persians plucked up courage to begin the attack, and on the day following they made a general assault on the Greek position. A fierce struggle ensued, with no loss to the Greeks, and great damage to the Persians.

During all this time the little army at Thermopylæ had been engaged in their defence of the pass. After the third day of fighting at Artemisium news arrived of the death of Leonidas, and the destruction of his force. After this the road to Southern Greece lay open, and there was no longer any use in defending the position at Artemisium; it was, therefore, resolved to abandon that position, and choose some point of defence farther south.

Xerxes now sent a message to his fleet, which

had removed to Artemisium on the departure of the Greeks, inviting all who pleased to come to view the battlefield at Thermopylæ. "Come and see," said the herald, "how the Great King fights with fools who defy his power." Then there was a general rush for the boats, to go to see that great sight. And there lay the Greeks, all in one heap, three hundred Spartans, seven hundred Thespians, and many Helots; and scattered over the field were some thousand bodies of Persians. But the fraud was too rank, even for those slavish eyes. The number of the Persians slain was really twenty thousand; and nineteen thousand of these had been buried in great trenches, over which earth and leaves were scattered, to deceive those who came from the fleet.

After this brave show Xerxes began his march towards Athens. As he was starting, certain Greeks, deserters from Arcadia, poor and rude men, were brought before him. Being asked what the Greeks were doing, the men answered that they were keeping the Olympic festival. "And what is the prize for which they strive?" asked a Persian: "A wreath of olive," was the answer. Then one of the Persian nobles turned to Mardonius, and said: "Mardonius, what manner of men are these, and how shall we fight against them, whose highest reward is not wealth, but honour?"

Leaving Thermopylæ, the army first entered Doris, the ancient mountain home of the Dorians; then they passed on into Phocis, burning and

## 192 Stories from Greek History

destroying all that lay in their path. The inhabitants had fled, some to the sheltering valleys of Parnassus, others to Locris. When they came to the borders of Bœotia the army divided, the main body pushing on towards Athens, while a smaller division turned westward, with orders to plunder the temple at Delphi. For Xerxes had informed himself carefully of all the treasures in the Delphic temple, so that he knew them better than those which he had left in his own house, especially the offerings of Crœsus, King of Lydia.

When the men of Delphi heard that the Persians were approaching they were filled with alarm, and consulted the oracle concerning the temple treasures, whether they should bury them in the earth or convey them to another place. But the god forbade them to touch the treasure, saying that he himself was able to defend his own. Reassured on this point, the Delphians now took thought for themselves, and fled with their wives and children, some to Parnassus, others to the opposite coast of Peloponnesus. Only sixty were left in the city with the prophet. The barbarians were already descending the side of Parnassus when the prophet, whose name was Aceratus, saw the sacred weapons, which were kept in the sanctuary, and which no mortal hand might touch, lying outside the temple. This was wonderful enough; but greater marvels succeeded. As the barbarians were passing the temple of Athene, which lay on their way to the oracle, a tremendous peal of thunder broke over their heads, and two

## The Invasion of Xerxes 193

huge crags, dislodged from the heights of Parnassus, tore through their ranks; and from the neighbouring temple a battle-cry was heard, which came from no mortal lips. All these things coming together struck terror into the guilty hearts of the Persians, and they fled. Seeing this, the Delphians pursued, and cut down not a few of them. Thus did the god of Delphi defend his own.

### V

#### SALAMIS

"So night wore on, and the Hellenic host  
In no wise sought to take to secret flight.  
And when day, bright to look on with white steeds,  
O'erspread the earth, then rose from the Hellenes  
Loud chant of cry of battle, and forthwith  
Echo gave answer from each island rock,  
And terror then on all the Persians fell,  
Of fond hopes disappointed. Not in flight  
The Hellenes then their solemn pæans sang;  
But with brave spirit hasting on to battle.

And all at once we heard a mighty shout,—  
'O sons of Hellenes, forward, free your country;  
Free, too, your wives, your children, and the shrines  
Built to your fathers' gods. . . .'\*

**W**HILE these things were happening at Delphi the main body of Xerxes' army swept on through Bœotia, burning Plataea and Thespiæ on their way, and

\* Translated from Æschylus by Dean Plumptre.

## 194 Stories from Greek History

entered Attica three months after they had left the Hellespont. When they reached Athens they found the city deserted, all but the Acropolis, where a few desperate men had barricaded themselves with defences of wood, trusting to the words of the oracle, where it spoke about the "wooden wall." The Persians stationed themselves on an opposite height, called the Hill of Ares, and plied the wooden defences of the Acropolis with burning arrows. The "wooden wall" soon took fire; but still that handful of men held out, rolling down rocks on the Persians when they tried to scale the steep sides of the citadel; and though Hippias was sent to offer them their lives, they would not listen to him. At last certain of the Persians succeeded in climbing up on the northern side of the hill, which is so precipitous that no one thought of watching it; when the defenders saw this some flung themselves from the ramparts, and perished, while others took refuge in the temple; but the Persians opened the gates to their comrades, and every Athenian who remained in the Acropolis was slain. The temple was stripped of its treasures, and all the buildings of the Acropolis were burnt.

Thus Xerxes was at last revenged for the burning of Sardis. Now, whether his conscience pricked him for the destruction of the temple, or whether he had been warned in a dream, we cannot tell; but shortly after, as if to relieve himself of some scruple, he sent for the Athenian exiles, and bade them offer sacrifice after their own manner in the

Acropolis. Among the temples which had been burnt was one of Erechtheus, an ancient Athenian hero, and within it was a sacred olive-tree, which had perished in the flames ; and when these men went up to sacrifice at the command of Xerxes they saw a green shoot which had sprouted from the charred stump and shot up to the height of a cubit.

Some days after the arrival of Xerxes at Athens the Greek fleet had put in at Salamis. This was done at the request of the Athenians, who wished to remove their wives and children to a place of safety. They were disappointed in the conduct of their allies, whom they expected to find encamped in full force in Bœotia ; instead of which they found them busily engaged in fortifying the isthmus, while Attica was abandoned to the enemy. Other reasons there were which determined them to forsake their city : first the words of the oracle, which forbade them to face the Persians in the field, and more recently the conduct of a huge serpent which dwelt in the temple of Athene on the Acropolis, and was regularly fed with a honey-cake. Just at this moment the cake was left untouched, and this was understood to mean that the goddess had left the city with her familiar. So they made haste, and carried their families and goods, some to Trœzen, some to Salamis, some to Ægina.

The whole fleet was now assembled at Salamis, in number about three hundred and seventy. Of these, the Athenians brought one hundred and



## 196 Stories from Greek History

eighty; but the supreme command was given to the Spartans, for the allies refused to serve under any other leaders. A dispute arose among the commanders as to where they should take up their station for the impending fight. Most were agreed that it would be better to await the enemy off the isthmus, where they would be supported by the land force. While they were still debating there came a man, a fugitive from Athens, announcing that Xerxes was in possession of the city. When they heard this such a panic arose that some of the captains would not hear another word, but rushed off to their ships, and began to hoist sail, while those who remained determined to remove to the isthmus next day.

Night fell, and each commander went down to his ship. When Themistocles reached his quarters he was questioned by Mnesiphilus, a friend of his, about the decision of the leaders. Being informed that they had decided to withdraw to the isthmus, he said: "Then if these weigh anchor from Salamis thou wilt have no country left to fight for; each division will sail to its own city, and neither Eurybiades nor any other man on earth will be able to prevent the armament from being scattered. And thus Greece will be ruined by folly. Go, therefore, and try if there be any means to reverse this fatal decision, and see if thou canst induce Eurybiades to make them remain."

Deeply struck by these words, Themistocles paused not to answer, but went at once to the ship of Eurybiades, the commander-in-chief. Repeat-

ing the arguments of Mnesiphilus, and adding many more of his own, he at last prevailed with the admiral to summon the council again. When the captains were met Themistocles, without waiting for Eurybiades to open the debate, began at once urging with argument and entreaty. While he spoke, Adeimantus the Corinthian said to him: "Themistocles, in the games those who start before the signal are flogged." "Ay," answered Themistocles; "but those who falter do not win the crown." Then he turned to Eurybiades, and mentioning nothing of the probable dispersion of the fleet, which would have been indecent in the presence of the other captains, pointed out the advantage of bringing on an engagement in the narrow waters off Salamis, where the enemy would not be able to make effective use of his numbers; whereas if they fought in the open sea by the isthmus they would lose this advantage, besides betraying Salamis, Ægina, and Megara to the enemy. Lastly, he reminded the admiral of the promise conveyed by the oracle: "O Salamis, thy glorious name," etc. He had hardly finished when Adeimantus began to assail him with violent abuse. "Be silent," he said, "thou homeless fellow; show us thy city, and thy place among Greeks, before thou presumest to take part in this debate. Suffer not, Eurybiades, a man who has no city to address the meeting." This brutal taunt, in allusion to the burning of Athens, which the Athenians had abandoned for the common good, provoked Themistocles

## 198 Stories from Greek History

beyond endurance. "Thou villain!" he exclaimed, "we have a city, and a land also, far larger than thine, as long as we have two hundred triremes manned. With these we can take possession of any city in Greece." Then turning to Eurybiades once more, he said: "If thou remain here, and show thyself a true man, well; but if not, thou wilt ruin Greece, for all depends on the fleet. Be guided by me: if thou do otherwise then, without more ado, we will take our families on board, and sail off to Siris, in Italy, and found a new city there; and when ye have lost us, and are left to fight alone, ye will remember my words." This last argument turned the scale; in great alarm lest the Athenians should carry out the threat of Themistocles, Eurybiades gave his vote to remain.

Next day land and sea were disturbed by an earthquake. Then many a prayer went up from those anxious hearts, and many a voice called on the heroes whose memory haunts that spot—on Ajax, and Telamon, on Æacus, Peleus, and Achilles.

There was in the army of Xerxes at this time a certain Athenian, named Dicæus, who was an exile from his country, and in high repute among the Persians. While the Persians were ravaging the plain of Attica it chanced that this Dicæus was walking with Demaratus, the exiled Spartan king, in the neighbourhood of Athens, when suddenly they saw a great cloud of dust proceeding from the direction of Eleusis, a town lying north-

west of Athens, seat of the worship of Demeter ; and then they heard a voice, like that of the worshippers at Eleusis, when they cry : " Hail, Bacchus ! " And the cloud was such as would be raised by the feet of thirty thousand men. Now, Demaratus knew nothing of the rites practised at Eleusis, so he asked what this voice meant ; and Dicæus answered : " Demaratus, surely some great disaster is about to befall the king's army ; for it is very plain, since Attica is deserted, that this voice is divine, coming from Eleusis to the aid of the Athenians and their allies ; and if this sign alights on Peloponnesus, then the king himself and the land force will be in peril, but if it turn to the ships at Peloponnesus the king will be in danger of losing his fleet. As for the voice which thou hearest, it is the cry of the worshippers in the yearly festival of the Mother and the Maid." \* Then said Demaratus : " Hush ! speak not of this to anyone else ; for if this come to the king's ears thou wilt lose thy head, and neither I, nor any man besides, will be able to save thee. Be still, therefore ; and as for this army, it shall be Heaven's care." Then, as they gazed and listened to the cry, the whirling dust was caught up and changed into a cloud of heaven, and the cloud swept away towards the Greek station at Salamis ; so they knew that the fleet of Xerxes was doomed.

The Persian armada was now lying off Phalerum, on the mainland, a little to the east of Salamis. The losses of both fleet and army had now been

\* Demeter and Persephone.

## 200 Stories from Greek History

made good by the accession of those Greeks who had joined Xerxes on his march from Thermopylæ. When all resistance was at an end in Athens, Xerxes went down to the fleet, wishing to consult with his admirals. So he sat down in state, and next to him were the princes of Tyre and Sidon, and after them the other princes and nobles in order of rank. Then he sent Mardonius round with the question: "Shall we engage the Greeks in a sea fight?" And all the others answered "Yes."

But Artemisia, Queen of Halicarnassus, the only woman who held command in the fleet, was against it, and she said to Mardonius: "Take my answer to the king, and say that I bid him spare his ships, and not risk a sea-fight. The Greeks are as much superior to his men as men to women. And why need he hazard a battle at all? He has taken Athens, which was the object of the invasion, and the rest of Greece is in his hands. No one stands in his way; those who have resisted him have fared as they deserved. If he remains where he is the Greeks will soon disperse for want of provisions; or, if he advances against Peloponnesus, they will be drawn off from Salamis to defend their homes. But if he is in too much haste to fight on the sea his fleet will be defeated; and a naval defeat means the ruin of his army. Trust not thy followers, O king, for good masters have bad servants." Then those who were friendly to Artemisia trembled for her, while those who envied her for the high honour in which she was held by Xerxes were

glad, believing that she was ruined. But Xerxes was much pleased with her answer, and she stood higher in his favour than ever; nevertheless, he gave the order for battle, thinking that his presence would inspire courage in the fleet.

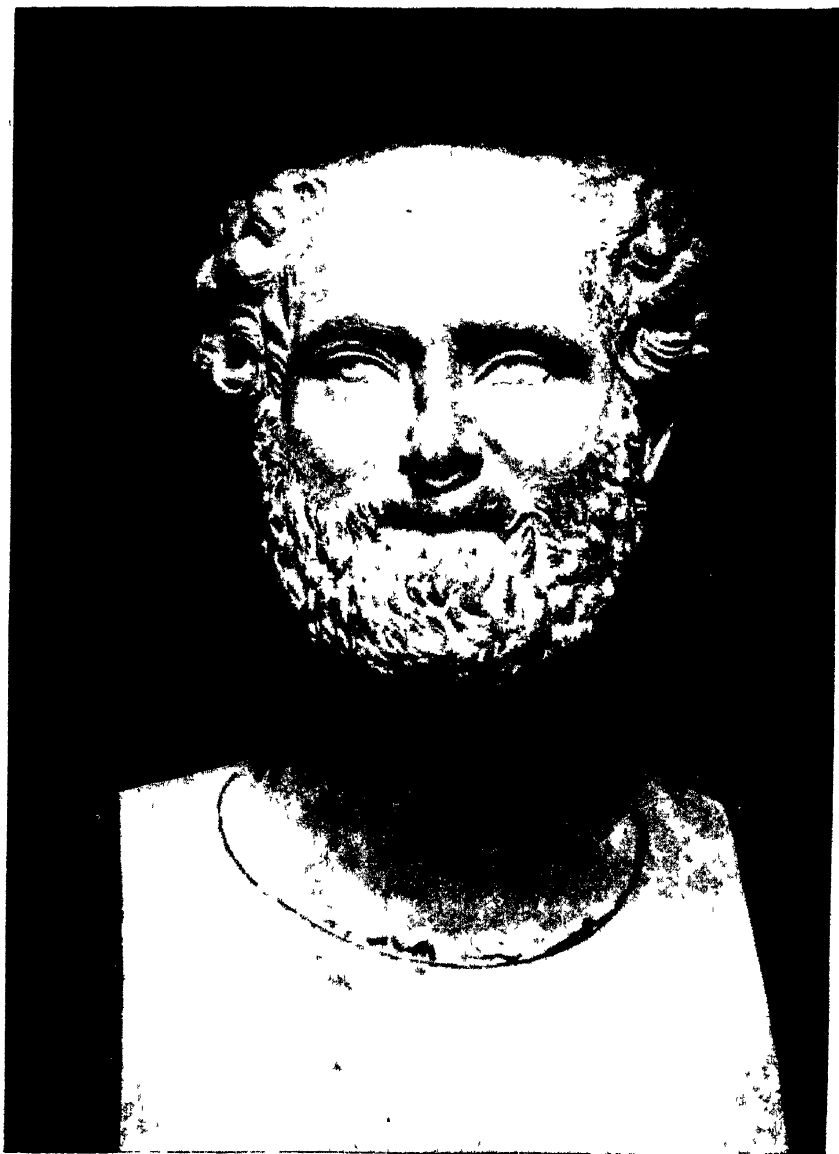
So the naval host began to get under weigh for Salamis, and at the same time the army set out towards Peloponnesus, where the whole force of the allies was preparing to receive them. For as soon as the news of the defeat at Thermopylæ reached Peloponnesus they made haste, and marched in a body to the isthmus, and, having broken up the road which leads into Attica, they began to build a wall across the isthmus from sea to sea. Many thousand hands toiled day and night, piling up bricks, stones, logs, and baskets of sand, so that the work went on apace. It was a race for dear life, so they thought, for they had no hope of a victory for the fleet.

Meanwhile, among the Greeks at Salamis all was still terror and indecision. "Xerxes is on his march to Peloponnesus; why should we stay here, and fight for a captured city? What if we are defeated, and shut up in the island? Who will then defend our homes and families?" Such were the murmurs heard all through the fleet. The Athenians alone bore the heart and spirit of true patriots. They had no homes to defend; the world was all before them—they could build a city where they chose; yet they remained, and fought, not for Athens, but for Greece. Their example was followed by the men of Ægina and

## 202 Stories from Greek History

Megara. All the rest exclaimed loudly against the folly of Eurybiades in keeping them there. Themistocles, seeing that a general mutiny was about to break out, stole silently away from the noisy disputants, and, calling a slave, sent him quietly off in a boat with a message to Xerxes. Sicinnus rowed across the bay, and, hailing an admiral's ship was taken on board, and delivered his message: "Themistocles, leader of the Athenians, has sent me, without the knowledge of the other Greeks, wishing to do the Persians a service, to let you know that the Greeks intend to run away; and now, if you can catch them, and hinder their flight, you may gain a notable victory; for they are at feud with one another, and will not resist you, but those of them who favour your cause and those who do not will destroy one another before your eyes." When the Persians heard this they at once took steps to cut off the retreat of the Greeks by blocking both entrances to the bay of Salamis, north and south, with their ships. This manœuvre was completed during the night, and at the same time a picked body of Persian infantry was landed on the little island of Psyttalea, on the southern end of the channel, where the disabled ships of both sides would be likely to put in for refuge.

While the net was thus being drawn round them the Greeks were still brawling and disputing among themselves. The uproar was at its height when a message came to Themistocles that someone was waiting outside to speak with him. He



Aristides

By permission of D Anderson, Rome





went out, and there stood Aristides, a famous Athenian, and his bitter foe in public life, who was living in banishment at Ægina. Aristides had taken ship, and passing with difficulty through the Persian lines in the dark, landed at Salamis to share in his country's peril. When he saw Themistocles, he said: "We have striven hard against one another, and let us continue that strife, and see which of us can serve our country best. It is too late now to talk of retiring to Peloponnesus; we cannot do it if we would, for I have seen with my own eyes that we are surrounded on all sides." Themistocles was full of joy at this news, and he did not conceal from Aristides that it was his work. "Go and tell them yourself," he said; "if I tell them they will think that it is a trick." Aristides went in, and delivered his message; but still they would not believe him. At last there came a ship from Tenos, which had deserted from the Persians, and put an end to their doubts by confirming the report of Aristides. So now at last they made ready for battle.

The eventful day had dawned, and there was no room left for doubt or debate; the Greeks were caught in the toils, and fight they must. Let us forget the weakness they had shown, and think rather of the cause for which they fought—a cause as great and momentous as that for which the Athenians fought at Marathon. As dawn stole on over the cliffs of Salamis, the Greeks, who were lying along the shore of the island which

## 204 Stories from Greek History

faces Attica, saw the enemy's fleet bearing down upon them in a long line from the opposite shore. There was a moment's hesitation, and then an Athenian ship darted forward from the Grecian line, and dashed into a Phœnician vessel: so violent was the shock that the two ships remained jammed together. Then the trumpet sounded; and a mighty shout roused the echoes among the rocks of Salamis as the whole Grecian fleet advanced on the dense masses of the enemy. Again the Persian saw his hopes deceived; there was no sign of flight or faltering now. At first the weight and bulk of the opposing fleet enabled it to keep its ground; but as fresh reinforcements kept crowding into the narrow strait, and those in the van flying before the Greeks strove to force their way to the rear, there arose a wild scene of tumult and confusion, the Persian fleet becoming huddled together, like some unwieldy monster, ship fouling ship, amidst a hubbub of curses and cries; while the agile Greek vessels, keeping clear of the press, hovered round the helpless, blundering mass like tunny-fishers, hemming it in, running down now this ship, now that, until the whole sea was red with blood, and strewn with corpses and wreckage, and the air was filled with the shrieks of wounded and dying. Then a frantic rush was made for the open sea; the Athenians pursued, pausing here and there to cut down the miserable wretches who clung to floating timbers in the bay; and the ships of Ægina, waiting in the strait, fell upon the fugitives,

and a fresh scene of carnage followed. Night fell at last, and put an end to the slaughter. The Greeks retired to Salamis, and prepared to renew the battle on the morrow, while the remnant of the Persian fleet took refuge at Phalerum.

While the battle was still raging, Aristides landed a body of troops on the island of Psyttalea, and put all the Persians who were stationed there to the sword. Another incident of the battle deserves mention : a ship of Sidon was struck at the same moment by the galley of Themistocles and by one of Ægina ; on board this vessel was the gallant Pytheas,\* who had fought so bravely at Artemisium, and was thus restored to his country.

There is a rocky headland on the coast of Attica, commanding the bay of Salamis ; here a throne had been erected, and on it sat Xerxes, overlooking the fight. By his side were secretaries, with writing materials, ready to take down the names of those who distinguished themselves. As he sat watching the struggle, which was already beginning to turn against his own side, he saw the galley of Artemisia dash into another vessel. One of those who sat by him said : " Master, seest thou how bravely the Queen of Halicarnassus fights ? Lo, she has sunk one of the enemy's ships ! " Xerxes was highly pleased, and said : " My men have become women — my women men." Now, Artemisia had, in fact, done a most wicked and malicious thing ; for being pursued

## 206 Stories from Greek History

by an Athenian ship, and seeing a vessel of the fleet of Xerxes in her way, against whose captain (it would seem) she had a grudge, she ran it down, and sank it, and the whole crew was drowned. The Athenian captain, seeing her sink one of the enemy's ships, drew off, supposing her to be a friend; and thus she escaped, and won a fair name by a foul deed.

The tumult was still at its height, and the event not yet decided, when certain Phœnicians who had lost their ships came crying to the king, and saying: "Master, we are betrayed by the Ionians!" As they uttered these words one of the Ionian ships, a vessel of Samothrace, charged an Attic ship, and sank her; and a moment after she in her turn was charged by an Æginetan galley, and began to fill; but the men on the Samothracian vessel, being skilled in the use of the javelin, drove off the Æginetans, and boarded and took possession of their ship. Then Xerxes was filled with anger against those Phœnicians, and turning to them, he said: "Cowards and slanderers! now verily ye shall have your reward for bearing false witness against better men than yourselves." Therewith he called to his guards, saying: "Take them away, and cut off their heads." And it was done.

It was to be almost his last act of power on the soil of Greece; for now the rout had begun, and Xerxes rent his clothes, and groaned aloud, as he saw the battered remnant of his great fleet

crawling painfully in a long line, like a wounded snake, into the bay of Phalerum. At once he began to think of flight, for he feared that the Greeks would sail to the Hellespont, and break down the bridge. In order that none might suspect his purpose he made preparations to throw a causeway between the mainland and Salamis. When they saw this all supposed that he meant to continue the war.

Meanwhile he sent a courier to Sousa to announce his defeat. "There is no mortal thing," we are told, "which reaches its goal more speedily than these Persian couriers, so carefully have the Persians provided for this need. For each day's journey a man and a horse are posted at regular intervals; and neither snow, nor heat, nor rain, nor darkness may hinder each horseman from covering his allotted space at full speed. He who starts first delivers his despatch to the second, the second to the third, and so along the whole line, as in the torch race which the Greeks run in honour of the God of Fire." Already one of these couriers had been sent to announce the taking of Athens, and on his arrival the Persians strewed the way with myrtle boughs, and burnt incense; but the tidings of the second courier crushed them to earth in the midst of their rejoicings, and the land was filled with mourning and woe.

Mardonius now feared for his own safety, seeing the disaster which had fallen on Xerxes, who was not likely to forget by whose counsel he had

## 208 Stories from Greek History

entered on the mad enterprise. Accordingly he went to the king, and bade him not despair. "It is on men," he said, "not on ships, that the issue depends. If thou wilt, let us march forthwith on Peloponnesus; but if thou art minded rather to return, then go thou, and take the larger part of the army with thee. But suffer not the Persians to become matter of scorn to the Greeks; they are not cowards, like this rabble of Phœnicians, Egyptians, Cypriots, and Cilicians. Leave me, then, with thirty myriads,\* in Greece, and I promise to bring the whole land under thy sway."

Xerxes was much pleased with this advice, though he needed no prompting to send him on his travels—for, indeed, he was in a dreadful fright. He made a show of discussing the matter, and hearing on all sides the faithful echo of his own wishes, he gave his consent to the proposal of Mardonius. The fleet was at once sent off to guard the bridge over the Hellespont. While rounding the eastern headland of Attica in the twilight they mistook some outlying rocks for the Greek fleet, and bore away at headlong speed, as if they were rowing a race. The Athenians were eager to pursue them, but as the other allies hung back they were obliged to desist.

A few days after, Xerxes, attended by Mardonius, set out on his homeward march. When they reached Thessaly, Mardonius chose out the men with whose help he was to conquer Greece, intending to winter in Thessaly, and open his cam-

\* 300,000.

paign in the spring. Xerxes was still in Thessaly when a herald arrived from Sparta, sent by command of the Delphic oracle to demand vengeance for Leonidas. When Xerxes heard the words of the herald: "O King of the Persians, the men of Lacedæmon and the Spartan children of Hercules demand vengeance for blood, because thou hast killed their king, who was defending Greece"—he laughed, and after a long pause he answered, pointing to Mardonius: "Here is he who shall give you such vengeance as ye merit."

So the herald went his way, and Xerxes left Mardonius in Thessaly, and, pushing on night and day, arrived at the banks of the Strymon. The bridge was gone, and the weary army, now much reduced in number, sat round their camp fires, wondering how they should cross the broad stream on the morrow. In the night the wind came down from the north, bringing a bitter frost, and when they arose next day they saw a bridge of ice stretched across the river. Then those who had never prayed before sent up a word of praise and thanksgiving to Heaven. Forthwith the passage over that treacherous bridge began; some got over in safety, but as the sun gained power the ice began to soften, and suddenly with a crash that slippery floor sank under the weight, and thousands were swallowed up in the gulf.

Small was the remnant of that once mighty army which now struggled wearily on through the bleak land of Thrace, and every day their



## 210 Stories from Greek History

ranks grew thinner by famine and disease. They were driven to the direst straits for food, the land through which they passed was stripped by the starving fugitives, as though a swarm of locusts had passed over it ; where they found corn standing they reaped it ; failing that, they devoured grass and leaves, and bark torn from the trees. At last, after six weeks of misery, they reached the shores of the Hellespont. The bridge had been dispersed by storms, but ships were there to convey them over to Asia.

### VI

#### PLATÆA

**W**HILE Mardonius was still lying in Thessaly he sent Alexander, King of Macedon, with a message to Athens. And these were the words of Alexander: "Men of Athens, thus saith Mardonius: 'I am charged by the king to say that he forgives all that ye have done against him, and he commands me to restore your land, and to give you free choice of any other land besides your own, and to leave you your freedom; further, he bids me build up again all the temples which he has burnt. Why are ye so mad as to make war on the king, and to be always running a race for your lives? Ye cannot hope to hold out against him, having before you the visible

proofs of his power. Cease, then, this useless strife, and join the king, not as subjects, but as friends and allies.' These are the words of Mar-donius. And I myself advise you, as a friend, to take this offer. Ye cannot always resist Xerxes; his power is more than human, and his arm is very long. Why should ye always suffer, dwelling in a land which is like a battle-ground between two armies? Surely this is worth much—to be the chosen friends and allies of the Great King." So far Alexander.

The Spartans had heard of the mission of the Macedonian, and being full of alarm lest the Athenians should be persuaded, they had sent men to answer his words; and the Athenians, fully understanding the suspicions of Sparta, had managed so that they should be introduced to the assembly together, wishing to make plain their intentions to all the world. The Spartan speaker began by reminding the Athenians that they were the authors of the war,\* and, therefore, should be the last to withdraw from it; he recalled the noble traditions of Athens, ever the champion of liberty; he sympathised with their present distress, through the ruin of their homes and lands, and offered, on behalf of the allies, to support their wives and families as long as the war lasted. Concluding with an earnest appeal, he said: "Listen not to the smooth words of Alexander: he is a tyrant, and the friend of tyrants, and acts after his kind. It is fitting that he

\* By their part in the burning of Sardis, p. 140.

## 212 Stories from Greek History

should say such things, but most unfitting that ye should do them, for ye know that honour and truth are alike remote from the barbarians."

Then he who spoke for Athens rose, and turning first to Alexander, said: "We know that the power of Persia is many times greater than ours, so that thou hast no need to taunt us with that. Nevertheless, we cling to our freedom, and will defend ourselves as well as we can. To make terms with the barbarian is a thing we will not hear of: speak no more of it. Take this answer to Mardonius: 'Thus say the Athenians, as long as the sun keeps his path in the heavens we will never make terms with Xerxes.' Trusting in our allies, and in the gods and heroes whose temples and homes he has impiously burnt, we will go against him, and fight him. Never again come hither with such a message as this, nor give fair names to foul deeds; we would not that any harm should befall thee, who art our guest and our friend." Then addressing himself to the Spartan, he said: "That the Spartans should fear lest we make terms with Persia was natural enough; but ye know little of the Athenian spirit to harbour such a fear. Not for all the gold in Persia, not for the fairest and most fruitful land that eye ever saw, would we sell the freedom of our fatherland to the Mede. How could we entertain such a thought while our violated shrines and ruined homes still call aloud for vengeance; when the most sacred ties—common blood and language, common religion and manners

—would cry shame on the deed? Athens does not breed traitors. Know this, if ye knew it not before, that as long as one Athenian survives we will never make terms with Xerxes. We thank you for your kind foresight on our behalf in offering to support our families; by making it you have discharged all claims of humanity, but we will hold out as best we can without burdening you. And, since this is settled, do ye send forth your armies with all speed; for as soon as the barbarian has heard our answer he will set out towards Athens, and before he can reach our borders we ought to be in Bœotia ready to receive him.” And so ended that memorable scene.

The words of the Athenians proved true. No sooner did Mardonius receive the answer from Athens than he set out from his winter camp in Thessaly with all his forces in the spring of the year after Salamis, and marched into Bœotia. The Thebans urged him to remain in their land, and try to divide the Greek army by sending bribes to the leaders; but Mardonius was full of childish eagerness to take Athens a second time, and send the news by a line of beacons across the islands to Xerxes, who was at this time in Sardis. He had his wish: the Athenians had a second time abandoned their city, and withdrawn to Salamis. Mardonius made a second attempt to shake the loyalty of the Athenians, who had now been twice betrayed by their allies. He sent Murychides, a Greek of the Hellespont, with the same offers as had been brought by Alexander.

## 214 Stories from Greek History

The man delivered his message to the senate, and one of the senators, named Lycidas, proposed to lay the offer before the people. The mere hint was enough to rouse a storm of indignation, and as he was leaving the building where the senate sat he was set upon by an exasperated crowd, who stoned him to death; and the Athenian women, when they heard it, ran with loud cries to the traitor's house, and buried his wife and children under a shower of stones. Such was the frenzy of patriotism among the Athenians, now stripped a second time of their goods, deserted by their allies, and tempted by the enemy.

The Athenians had remained in their city until the last moment, hoping that the army of Peloponnesus would come to their aid; but when they heard that Mardonius had reached Bœotia they crossed over to Salamis, and sent messengers to Sparta to upbraid the Spartans with their treacherous delay and remind them of the offers of Mardonius, adding that even Athens may be driven in her extremity to look elsewhere for succour. When the envoys arrived in Sparta they found the whole city busy keeping the feast of Hyacinthus. Then they went to the Ephors, the chief magistrates in Sparta, and complained bitterly of their double dealing. "Foul measure have we had at your hands, O ye Spartans," said the Athenian envoy. "Fair and tempting were the offers of the king, brought to us when we were stripped of all; but we repulsed them with scorn, because we loved our country and would not

betray the Greeks. And what return have ye made for our self-sacrifice ? Once assured of our unshaken loyalty ye desert us, and leave our land to be ravaged a second time by the Persian. Yes ; we saw the wall across the isthmus on our way hither ; it was still unfinished when ye came across to Athens, and, not feeling safe, ye were full of fine words and fair offers ; now it is built, and ye turn your backs on us. But a truce to reproaches ! Be assured of this—the Athenians will never turn traitors. It is too late to meet Mardonius in Bœotia ; send, therefore, your army into Attica, and let us fight him there.”

But neither prayers nor reproaches had power to move the stolid conscience of a Spartan. The envoys were informed that they should have their answer next day, and next day they were put off till the day following, and so on from day to day, until ten days had passed, and nothing had been done. At last the Spartans were roused to action by a hint received from a certain Chileus, a Tegean, and a man of great influence in Sparta. “Take heed what ye do, ye Spartans,” said Chileus ; “if the Athenians turn against us a hundred doors will be opened into Peloponnesus for the Persian, and all our walls will not save us.” Alarmed by this warning, the Ephors, without saying a word to the Athenian envoys, at once sent off five thousand Spartans and thirty-five thousand Helots, under Pausanias, one of the royal house. Next day the Athenians, weary of waiting, went to take leave of the Ephors, and said to

## 216 Stories from Greek History

them: "Yes; feast and make merry, ye Spartans, and leave us to our fate! We must now go to Mardonius, and do his bidding; for what follows ye must thank yourselves." Then the Ephors declared, and swore an oath, that the army was already on the march against "the foreigners"; for so they called the barbarians. The Athenians could not believe their ears; but being assured of the fact they followed the army with all speed; and with them went five thousand heavy-armed infantry, called hoplites, from the subjects of Sparta.

As long as there was any doubt of the intentions of the Athenians, Mardonius lingered in Athens, and left the farms of the Athenians untouched; but being hopeless now of shaking their patriotism, and hearing by a courier from Argos of the approach of Pausanias, he determined to fall back on Bœotia, where the ground was more suitable for cavalry, and whence he would have a better chance of making good his retreat, in case of a reverse. Before setting out for Bœotia he made a sudden descent on Megara, hoping to cut off the advance guard of the Greek army. The attempt failed, and this was the farthest point in Western Europe reached by the Persians. Having trampled down the crops of the Megarians, he retraced his steps, and, crossing the Attic border, encamped in the Theban territory, not far from Plataea, on the banks of the Asopus.

While all hearts were in suspense, expecting the final struggle, Attaginus, a wealthy Theban.

made a great feast for Mardonius and fifty of the noblest among the Persians. Fifty couches were spread, and on each couch reclined a Persian and a Theban. Among the guests was Thersander, a Greek of Orchomenus, and he afterwards told a good story of this memorable banquet. When the dishes were removed, and the wine was going round, the Persian who shared the couch with Thersander addressed him in Greek, and asked him from what city he was. Thersander answered : " From Orchomenus." Then said the Persian : " Thou hast sat at the same table, and drunk of the same cup, with me ; now, therefore, I will leave thee a memorial of my prudence, that thou mayest be forewarned and forearmed. Seest thou these guests, and yonder host encamped by the river ? Yet a little while and of all these very few will be left alive." And as he said this the Persian let fall many tears. Thersander wondered at his behaviour and his words, and said to him : " Why dost thou not tell this to Mardonius, and the Persians who stand next to him in honour ? " The Persian replied : " My friend, what God has ordained no man may avert. Men's hearts are blinded, and they will not see the truth. Many of us Persians know what I have told you ; but fate constrains us, and we follow the others. This is the direst pang which mortals know : to be full of knowledge and void of power."

Leaving the isthmus, where they had assembled, the combined forces of the Greeks crossed the Attic frontier, and encamped on the slopes of Cithæron,



## 218 Stories from Greek History

opposite the Persians. While they lay there Mardonius sent the whole body of his cavalry against them. Leading the chivalry of Persia rode Masistius, a tall and handsome figure, mounted on a Nisæan charger. The cavalry charged in divisions, and did much mischief; and as they came up they reviled the Greeks, and called them women. The Megarians, who were stationed in an exposed position, suffered severely from these attacks, and they sent a herald to the Greek generals, saying that, unless they were supported, they would have to retreat. Then three hundred Athenian volunteers, with a body of archers, went to their aid, and the engagement was hotly maintained for some time. At last, as Masistius was leading his division to the charge, an arrow struck his horse in the side; the animal reared up in his agony, and Masistius was thrown. Seeing him down, the Athenians rushed forward, and secured his horse. Masistius resisted, and at first they could not kill him, for under his purple tunic he wore a corselet of fine mail, which turned the points of their weapons; but finally someone struck him in the eye, and he fell dead. When his men, who had been separated from their leader, saw that he was down they raised a shout, and charged in full force to recover his corpse. The Athenians, seeing themselves attacked by the whole body of the cavalry, called to their comrades to support them, and while these were coming up to their aid they had to sustain a fierce assault from overwhelming numbers. Then

succour arrived, and the Persians were driven off, with loss, leaving the body of Masistius in the hands of the Greeks.

Deep was the sorrow of Mardonius and the Persians when they heard of the cavalry leader's fall. The whole army abandoned itself to the extravagance of Oriental grief: they cut off their hair, and cropped their horses and beasts of burden, and all the valley was filled with the voice of wailing as they mourned him who, after Mardonius, was the noblest of the Persians. Meanwhile the Greeks had placed the body on a waggon, which was driven slowly along the lines, and as it passed the men left their ranks, and ran to gaze at the fallen leader, so tall he was, and so comely of form.

After the cavalry skirmish the Greeks determined to fall back on Plataea, which was a more suitable ground, and better provided with water. There they drew up according to their cities. Hereupon a great dispute arose between the Tegeans and Athenians as to which should occupy the left wing.\* Both sides argued at great length, quoting instances from the remote past; but the Athenians turned the scale in their own favour by recalling their exploits at Marathon. At the sound of that magic name the whole Spartan army shouted with one voice that the Athenians were worthier to hold the post of honour. The right wing was held by the Spartans. Against them were arrayed the choicest troops of the

\* P<sub>1</sub> 110.

## 220 Stories from Greek History

Persians, who had shifted their ground, following the movements of the Greeks. The number of the Persian forces, including the Greeks who fought on their side, was three hundred and fifty thousand; of the Greeks under Pausanias, one hundred and ten thousand.

Sacrifice was now offered on both sides, to see if the moment were favourable for an attack; on both sides the answer was the same, forbidding them to leave their ground. Eight days passed, during which reinforcements kept pouring into the Greek camp. To prevent this Mardonius sent horsemen to occupy the passes of Cithæron, which lead towards Plataea, and these, falling in with a baggage-train of five hundred beasts bringing supplies to the Greeks, slew both the animals and their drivers, except a few which they brought back to the Persian camp.

Two more days went by without any decisive movement on either side, though the Greeks were continually harassed by the Theban and Persian horse. On the eleventh day Mardonius, disregarding the suggestion of the Thebans that he should fall back on Thebes, and try the effect of gold on the Greek generals, resolved, in spite of sacrifices, to force a battle, and gave the order for a combined attack to begin on the morrow.

The night was far advanced, when a horseman rode up to the Athenian outposts, and asked leave to speak with the generals. These having been summoned, he said: "I have come at the peril of my life to tell you that Mardonius intends to do

battle with you to-morrow. Go and tell this to Pausanias, and to no one else, for if this come to the ears of Mardonius I am a dead man. I myself am a Greek, descended from Greeks, and I would not see Greece enslaved. If this war ends according to your desire, remember that I have taken my life in my hands to do you a service, and help me to gain my freedom. I am Alexander of Macedon."

The Athenian generals carried this message to Pausanias, and he, being alarmed, begged the Athenians to change places with him, exchanging the left wing for the right, against which Mardonius had posted the picked men of his army. "For you Athenians," said Pausanias, "have already fought the Persians, and know their manner of fighting, but the Spartans have not this knowledge." The Athenians willingly consented, and the exchange was made. Mardonius saw the manœuvre, and marched his Persians over against the left wing, whereupon Pausanias went back to the right; and Mardonius followed him again, so that they went into battle in their original positions.

When this marching and counter-marching was ended Mardonius sent a herald to the Spartan leaders, who said: "Men of Lacedæmon, ye are called by your countrymen the bravest of mankind, for that ye never leave your post, but stand fast, to slay or be slain. But now we see that not a word of this is true, for have ye not fled from the post of danger, leaving the Athenians

## 222 Stories from Greek History

to face us, and taking stand yourselves against our slaves? We have been much deceived in you; this is not the conduct of brave men. If ye are indeed the best of the Greeks, why should not we Persians and Spartans fight this quarrel out, and whichever side conquers theirs shall be the victory for the whole army." Having said this the herald waited a while, and, getting no answer, rode back to Mardonius; and he, now filled with pride and scorn, launched his cavalry against the Greeks. The attack was made along the whole line, and caused both disorder and loss in the Greek army. The mounted archers and javelin men continually harassed their ranks, and they could make no reply. The Persians choked up the fountain of Gargaphia, from which they drew their water, and it became impossible to maintain their present position.

Accordingly, the generals determined to retire in the night to a place called the Island, which is formed by two arms of the stream Oëroë, running down from the slopes of Cithæron. Here they would be defended from cavalry, plentifully provided with water, and in touch with their supplies. All that day they endured the persecutions of the enemy's horse; when night fell the whole Greek army, excepting the Spartans, Tegeans, and Athenians, took up their arms, and fled, not to the place appointed, but to the temple of Hera, under the walls of Plataea. Pausanias, thinking that they had gone to the Island, as agreed, gave the signal to his own men to follow. All the others

prepared to obey, but Amompharetus, the leader of a whole division, stubbornly refused. The Athenians had remained at their post, waiting to see what the Spartans would do, and seeing that something was going on among them they sent a herald to ask for orders. When the herald came to the Spartan station he found a violent dispute raging. There was Amompharetus obstinately refusing to move, while Pausanias and the other leaders were trying to persuade him. Amompharetus had in his hands a huge stone, and as the Athenian herald arrived he placed it at the feet of Pausanias, saying: "With this pebble I give my vote not to fly from the foreigners."\* Pausanias called him a fool and madman, and, explaining the situation to the Athenian herald, requested that the Athenians would close up with the Spartan ranks, and follow their movements.

Day was now beginning to break; and when the herald was gone Pausanias determined to march without Amompharetus, and led off his troops along a low line of hills at the base of Cithæron, while the Athenians followed along the plain. Then at last Amompharetus gave way, and marching sullenly after Pausanias joined the main body, which had waited for him about a mile off. At this very moment the Persian horse was upon them. For when Mar-domius found that Pausanias had deserted his post at Gargaphia he, being now full of contempt

\* P. 216.

## 224 Stories from Greek History

for the Spartans, led his Persians in hot pursuit of the runaways; and his whole army followed in wild disorder, thinking that the Greeks were delivered into their hands. The Athenians were screened from the Persians by a low line of hills, and Pausanias, being hard beset by the Persian cavalry, sent them an urgent message to come to his support. They were preparing to do so when the Greek troops in the Persian army fell upon them, so that they had enough to do to defend themselves.

Thus left alone with the Tegeans the Spartans offered sacrifice for battle; but the sacrifice was against them, and the Persians, making a fence of their wicker shields, showered the Spartans with arrows. His men were falling on all sides when Pausanias, looking towards the temple of Hera at Plataea, prayed earnestly, saying: "Great goddess, withdraw not thy countenance from us in this hour of need." As he uttered those words the Tegeans began to advance against the enemy, and at the same moment the sacrifices changed, and Pausanias gave the order to charge. The Persians, who had thrown away their bows, stood waiting for them behind their rampart of shields. When these had fallen a long and obstinate struggle ensued, the Persians seizing the Spartan spears, and breaking them, then grappling their enemies hand to hand. But being without defensive armour, and no match for the Greeks in training, they were gradually overpowered. The Greeks fought in a compact body, while the



Persian Soldier killed at Marathon





Persians, coming on in small parties, were cut off in detail. Where Mardonius fought, mounted on a white charger, and surrounded by a thousand picked Persians, the struggle was long and fierce. Here many of the Spartans fell, but at last Mardonius was struck down, and his chosen troop routed ; then the whole army turned their backs, and fled to their camp at Thebes.

Of the Greeks who sided with the Persians the Thebans alone made any show of fighting. They were engaged with the Athenians, and left three hundred of their men on the field. Another division of Bœotian cavalry did good service by covering the retreat of the Persians. The real encounter was between the Spartans and the Persians under Mardonius, while half the Greek army stood idle under the walls of Plataea. These last, when they got news of the victory, rushed off to the battlefield to get their share of the spoils. Six hundred of them, in the Megarian army, were cut down by the Bœotian cavalry as they poured in disorder across the plain.

Meanwhile the vast multitude of fugitives had reached the fortified camp, and shut the gates against the pursuers. The Spartans, who had no skill in this kind of warfare, for some time made vain attempts to storm the Persian stronghold. The arrival of the Athenians changed the aspect of affairs ; after a fierce struggle the rampart was thrown down, and the Greeks poured in. A fearful scene of carnage followed. The cowed and beaten Persians made little or no resistance ; they

## 226 Stories from Greek History

were slaughtered like sheep, till out of all that vast army, with the exception of thirty thousand, who fled with their leader as soon as the battle was decided, only three thousand survived. A splendid booty fell into the hands of the Greeks. Among other curious things, a brazen manger, made for the horses of Mardonius, and choicely worked, is mentioned.

We have not forgotten that unfortunate Spartan, Aristodemus,\* who remained behind when his comrade went to die among the three hundred at Thermopylæ. Stained with dishonour, tired of his life, he resolved to die on the field of Platæa. When the battle was at its height he left the ranks, and rushing into the thickest of the enemy fell, fighting like a hero. But the stern laws of Sparta would not allow one moment of desperate valour to blot out the memory of his shame. "He wished to die," they argued; "the other Spartans who fell wished to live, but did their duty, and died in doing it." Therefore of all those who had fallen Aristodemus alone was excluded from the honours of public burial, monument, and sacrifice.

When Xerxes fled from Greece he left his tent with all its furniture behind him for the use of Mardonius. After the victory Pausanias entered the splendid pavilion, and gazed in wonder on the lavish display of gold and silver and embroidered tapestries. Then he ordered the bakers and the cooks to prepare a dinner, such as they were used to set every day before Mardonius.

\* P. 186.

When it was ready he went in again, and found a feast set forth with princely pomp. Then a thought struck him, and he ordered his servants to make ready a meal such as was usual in Sparta. This was soon done, and Pausanias now called the Greek generals, and pointing to the Spartan and the Persian dinner, said: "Comrades, I called you in that ye might see the folly of the Persians, who left their stalled ox to come and take away from us our crust."

One act of justice remained to be done. The Thebans had taken sides openly with the Persians from the first, and had done the Greeks much mischief. Accordingly, eleven days after the battle, the allies marched in full force to Thebes, and demanded the surrender of all those who had helped the Persians. Their demand being refused they laid siege to the city, and ravaged the fields of the Thebans. After this had gone on for some days Timagenides, who with Attaginus\* headed the party friendly to Persia, offered to go and plead his cause before the allies. The Thebans willingly agreed, and sent a herald to say that they were ready to hand over the men. Upon this Attaginus fled; but his sons were delivered up to Pausanias, who let them go, saying that they should not suffer for their father's crime. The others who surrendered to Pausanias expected to save themselves by bribing their judges; but he, fearing this very thing, disbanded the army of the allies, and carrying his prisoners to Corinth, put them to death.

## VII

## MYCALE

WHILE these events were going on in Greece the Greek fleet, under Leotychides, was lying at Delos, and what remained of the Persian fleet after Salamis was stationed at Samos. Just before the battle of Plataea there came to Delos three Greeks, who had secretly stolen away from Samos, and one of them, whose name was Hegesistratus, made a long speech, entreating the Greek admirals to sail against the Persians, and free Ionia. "At the first sight of your ships," said the speaker, "the Ionians will revolt. As for the barbarians, they will never face you; and if they do, they will fall an easy prey. In the name of the gods whom we all worship I call on you to set free the Greeks, and drive off the barbarian. Nothing could be easier; their ships are bad sailers, and no match for yours. If ye have any doubt of our good faith we will remain as hostages in your hands." When the Samian envoy had finished, after a very long and earnest speech, Leotychides, seeking, perhaps, for a sign, or, perhaps, by some higher inspiration, simply asked: "Friend, what is thy name?" He answered: "Hegesistratus."\* Then Leotychides, preventing further words, answered: "It is a sign; lead on, and we follow, Hegesistratus; but first

\* "Leader of armies."

swear an oath, thou, and those who are with thee, that the Samians will be faithful allies." So when that oath was ended, the other two returned to Samos, but Hegesistratus remained with Leotychides.

Next day, after sacrifice, they sailed to Samos, and came to anchor near the great temple of Hera. The Persians, who had had enough of sea-fights, fled in haste to the mainland at Mycale, where a Persian army of sixty thousand men was encamped. Arrived there, they drew up their ships, and built a rampart around them of stones and wood, screened by an outer fence of palisades. At first the Greeks were somewhat disconcerted by the flight of the Persians, and doubted what they should do; but finally it was resolved to attack the Persians in their camp, so they made ready their ships, and bore down upon Mycale. As they drew near the shore they saw the Persian vessels all drawn up behind the rampart, and a large body of infantry stationed outside. Then Leotychides, bringing his ship close to the shore, made proclamation by a herald, saying: "Men of Ionia, all ye who can hear, mark my words, and tell them to those who do not hear them: when we begin the attack, first of all think of liberty, and then remember that the watchword is *Hera*." Having said this, he gave the signal to disembark. The Persians, though they could not understand the words, suspected that Leotychides had been inciting the Ionians to revolt. Consequently, while the Greeks were preparing

## 230 Stories from Greek History

for battle, they disarmed the Samians, and sent the Milesians inland to guard the mountain passes. Then they made a fence with their wicker shields, and waited for the Greeks.

The Greeks advanced in two divisions—one of these, consisting of the Athenians, Corinthians, and others, marching across a level plain, arrived first on the scene of action, and, anxious that the honour of the day should be all theirs, they fell upon the enemy, overthrew the rampart of shields, and after a stubborn fight drove the barbarians back into their camp. All resistance was now at an end, excepting among those of true Persian descent; these still fought on, until the arrival of the Spartans with the other division—which had been delayed by broken ground—completed the victory, though not without a desperate struggle. The Samians, unarmed as they were, had done all they could to help the Greeks; and the Milesians, who had been sent to guard the passes through the mountains, led the flying barbarians astray by roads which led back to the battlefield, and there took part with the Greeks in slaying them.

When the slaughter was ended the Greeks burnt the enemy's fleet and rampart, and having carried the booty on board their ships, sailed away to Samos.

## CONCLUSION

THE great struggle was over. Something yet remained to be done before the last remnant of the barbarians should be swept from the outlying districts of Greece. But the event of five pitched battles had finally decided the question whether Greek or Persian influence was to shape the destinies of Europe. If we pause at the end of our long journey and ask the question: To whom among the Greeks was the ultimate triumph especially due?—we need not wait long for an answer. Ionia, after a few flashes of spirit, soon sank back into cowardice and sloth. Thessaly, Thebes, and Argos took sides, openly or in secret, with the barbarians. Sparta was stolidly indifferent to all interests but her own. Even the patriots assembled at Salamis offer a depressing picture of coldness, indecision, and downright fear. Athens stood alone as a memorable exception; she alone was faithful, in every extremity, to the claims of honour and patriotism. Single-handed she had repulsed the first great attempt on the liberty of Greeks at a time when the very name of Persia was a terror to the world. Her city burnt, her fields laid waste, she would not forsake the allies who had forsaken her. She



## 232 Stories from Greek History

alone remained firm and unmoved among the wavering counsels and fainting hearts at Salamis. When the proud warriors of Sparta flinched before the face of their foes it was her sons who cheerfully stepped into their place. To her belonged the victory of Mycale, and it was her energy which enabled the Greeks to reap the full fruits of that victory. For nearly eighty years the barbarian was to be kept out of Greek waters by the terror of her name.

And so we will leave her, in the hour of her glory and triumph. Her temples still lie in ruins, her citizens are homeless, but a mighty spirit is stirring among them; they are full of joy and pride, confident in themselves. And it is not stones that make a city, but the hearts of true men.

“What constitutes a State?  
Not high-raised battlement or laboured mound,  
Thick wall or moated gate;  
Nor cities fair, with spires and turrets crowned  
No!—Men, high-minded men,  
With powers as far dull brutes endued,  
In forest, brake, or den,  
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude—  
Men who their duties know,  
Know too their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain;  
Prevent the long-aimed blow,  
And crush the tyrant, while they rend the chain.” \*

\* Sir William Jones, from Alcæus.

# PRONOUNCING AND EXPLANATORY INDEX

- Abdera (abdeera). Town in Thrace, 170
- Abydos (aby'dos). Town on Hellespont, 162
- Aceratus (ak'eerätus). Prophet of Delphi, 192
- Achæans (akee'ans). Early name for Greeks, 100
- Achæmenes (akee'mënēs). Ancient king of Persia, 59
- Acropolis (acröpolis). A citadel, 123
- Ademantus (adeiman'tus). Corinthian admiral, 188
- Adrastus (adras'tus). A prince of Phrygia, 6
- Æacus (ee'äkus). A hero of Ægina, 198
- Ægean (eejee'an). Sea dividing Greece from Asia Minor, 148
- Ægina (eeji'na). Island off coast of Attica, 174
- Æschylus (ee'sskilus). Athenian poet, 155
- Agamemnon (agamem'non). Ancient king of Achæans, 108
- Agariste (agaris'tee). A princess of Sicyon, 119
- Agathyrsi (agathyr'si). A Thracian tribe, 82
- Alcmæon (alkmee'on). A wealthy Athenian, 118
- Alcmæonidæ (alkmeeon'idee). Noble Athenian family, 130
- Aleuadæ (alyoo'ädee). Princes of Thessaly, 158
- Amasis (amä'sis). King of Egypt, 43
- Amazons. A race of warrior women, 82
- Ameinocles (amei'nöclees). A Greek, 179
- Ammon (a'mmôn). Another name for Zeus (Jupiter), 45
- Amphion (amph'i-on). A Corinthian, grandfather of Cypselus, 91
- Anacreon (anak'reon). A Greek poet, 55
- Androphagi (andro-phägi). A tribe of cannibals, 82
- Anepe (a'nepee). A place at the mouth of the Tigris, 145
- Aphetæ (aph'ëtee). A port in Thes-saly, 188
- Apis (ä'pis). A god of Egypt, 86
- Araxes (arax'ees). A river flowing into the Caspian Sea, 30
- Ares (a'rees). God of war (Mars), 171
- Argeia (arger'a). Mother of Procles and Eurysthenes, the first Spartan kings, 102
- Argo. The ship which was sent to fetch the golden fleece, 180
- Argos, a province of Peloponnesus, 4
- Arimaspians (arimas'pians). A fabulous people, 78
- Arion (are'ion). A poet of Corinth, 98
- Aristagoras (aristag'örass). Prince of Miletus, 133
- Aristides (arister'dees). A famous Athenian, 203
- Aristodemus (aristo-dee'mus). 1. A king of Sparta, 102; 2. A Spartan soldier, 186
- Aristogeiton (aristoge'i'ton). An Athenian, 127

## 234 Stories from Greek History

- Artabanus (artabā'nus). Uncle of Xerxes, 158  
 Artaphernes (artapher'nees). A Persian prince, 149  
 Artembares (artem'bārees). A noble Mede, 20  
 Artemisium (artēmi'sium). A cape north of Euboea, 177  
 Artiscus (artis'cus). A river of Thrace, now the Arda, 80  
 Asopus (aso'pus). A river of Boeotia, 216  
 Astyages (astý'āgees). King of Media, 16  
 Athene (athee'nee). Guardian goddess of Athens, 124  
 Athos A stormy cape in northern Greece, 161  
 Atossa (atoss'a). Wife of Darius, 66  
 Attagnus (attaj'nus). A wealthy Theban, 216  
 Atys (attis'). Son of Croesus, 6
- Bacchis (bak'kis). Ancestor of ruling family in Corinth, 91  
 Biton (bei'ton) of Argos, 4  
 Boeotia (beeō'tia). Province north of Attica, 153  
 Boreas (bō'reass). God of north wind, 179  
 Budini (būdei'nei). A tribe north of Black Sea, 82  
 Byzantium (byzan'tium). Ancient Constantinople, 141
- Callimachus (calli'mākus). Athenian general, 153  
 Cambyzes (camby'sees). Father of Cyrus, 16  
 Cambyzes (camby'sees). Son of Cyrus, 31  
 Cayster (caiss'ter). A river of Ionia, 140  
 Chalcis (cal'sis). A city of central Greece, 178  
 Chersonesus (kersonee'sus). A peninsula, north of Hellespont, 87  
 Chileus (keilyoos). A Greek of Tegea, 215
- Chilon (kei'lon). A Spartan, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, 122  
 Chios (kei'os). Island in Ægean, 134  
 Choaspes (coas'pees). Sacred river of Persia, 28  
 Cithæron (kithee'rōn). Mountain north of Attica, 172  
 Cleobis (cleōbis). A Greek of Argos, 4  
 Cleomenes (cleo'mēnees). King of Sparta, 136  
 Clisthenes (cleis'thēnees). Prince of Sicyon, 119  
 Corcyra (corsei'ra). Ancient Corfu, 97  
 Croton (crōtōn). Greek city in south of Italy, 64  
 Cynegyrus (kei-nee-geirus) Brother of Æschylus, 155  
 Cyno (kyno). Wife of Mithradates, 19  
 Cypselus (kyp'sēlus). Tyrant of Corinth, 93
- Darius (darei'us). King of Persia, 31  
 Datis. A Mede, 149.  
 Delos. Island in Ægean, seat of worship of Apollo, 126  
 Delphi City of central Greece, with temple and oracle of Apollo, 9  
 Demeter (deemee'teer). Goddess of agriculture, 145  
 Democedes (deemokee'des). A Greek physician, 64  
 Dicaeus (dikee'us). A Greek, 198  
 Dionysius (dioný'sius). A Greek captain at Lade, 145  
 Dithyramb (di'thýramb). A wild poem in honour of Bacchus, 98  
 Doris (do'ris). Province in northern Greece, 192
- Ecbatana (ecbat'ānā). Capital of Media, 25  
 Ecbatana (ecbat'ānā). In Syria, 51  
 Eetion (ee-ēt'i-ōn) of Corinth, 94  
 Eleusis (elyoo'sis). Town in Attica, 151  
 Elis (ee'lis). Province of Peloponnesus, 66

Ephialtes (ephial'tees) the traitor, 183  
 Epidaurus (epido'rus). Town of Peloponnesus, 94  
 Erechtheus (erech'thyoos). Ancient hero of Athens, 195  
 Eretria (eret'riā). City of Euboea, 150  
 Euboea (yoobee'ā). A great island on the east coast of Greece, 125  
 Eurotas (yooro'tas). River near Sparta, 186  
 Eurybiades (yooribi'ādees). Spartan admiral, 187  
 Eurytus (yoor'itus). A Spartan, 186  
 Evānetus (eevee'nētus). A Spartan, 176

Gargaphia (gargaph'ia). A fountain in Boeotia, 222  
 Gelo (gē'lo). Prince of Syracuse, 175  
 Geloni (gēlo'nei). A wild northern tribe, famous archers, 82  
 Getæ (gē'tee). A wild northern tribe, perhaps the Goths, 80  
 Glaucus (glau'cus). A Spartan, destroyed by Apollo, 111  
 Gobryas (go'briās). A noble Persian, 58  
 Gorgo (gor'go). Infant daughter of Cleomenes, 138  
 Gyndes (gind'ees). Branch of the Tigris, 28

Halys (halliss). A river of Asia Minor, 11  
 Harmodius (harmōd'ius). An Athenian, 127  
 Harpagus (har'pāgus). Servant of Astyages, 16  
 Hebrus (heeb'rus). River of Thrace, 168  
 Hegesistratus (heegesis'trātus). A Greek, 228  
 Hera (hee'ra). Goddess of Argos, 4  
 Hipparchus (hipparch'us). An Athenian, brother of Hippias, 127  
 Hippias (hippiās). Son of Pisistratus, tyrant of Athens, 88  
 Hippoclidēs (hippoclei'dees). An Athenian, 119

Hippocrates (hippō'crātees). Father of Pisistratus, 121  
 Histæus (histee'us). Tyrant of Miletus, 87  
 Hyacinthus (hyacinth'us). A beautiful youth, accidentally killed by Apollo. The legend symbolises the tender bloom of spring destroyed by the fierce summer heat, 214  
 Hydarnes (hydar'nees). A Persian general, 83  
 Hystaspes (hystas'pees). A Persian, father of Darius, 83.

Ida. Mountain in Asia Minor, 166  
 Idanthyrus (eidanthyr's'us). King of Thracians, 84  
 Iphigeneia (iphigen'er'a). Daughter of Agamemnon, 82

Labda (lab'da). A Corinthian woman, mother of Cypselus, 91  
 Lade (la'dee). Island near Miletus, 143  
 Lampsacus (lamp'sācus). Town on Hellespont, 130  
 Launum (lōrei'um). In Attica, with a rich silver mine, 174.  
 Leonidas (leon'idās). Spartan king, 180  
 Leotychides (leoty'ch'ides). Greek admiral, 228  
 Lesbos (lē's'bos). Island of Ægean, 146  
 Lichas (lei'kas). A Spartan, who discovered the bones of Orestes, 109  
 Lipsydion (lipsyd'ion). A fort in Attica, 126  
 Locris (lō'cris). Province of central Greece, 192  
 Lycidas (lyss'idās). An Athenian, 214  
 Lygdamis (lyg'damis). A Naxian, ally of Pisistratus, 126

Madytus. Town on Hellespont, 180  
 Magi. Priestly tribe of the Medes, 50  
 Magnesia (magnē'sia). Province of Asia Minor, 180

## 236 Stories from Greek History

- Malea (mäl'ëä). Cape of south Peloponnesus, 110
- Mandane (man'dänee). Daughter of Astyages, 16
- Marathon (ma'rathon). Battlefield in Attica, 150
- Mardonius (mardön'ius). Commander-in-chief of Persians at Plataea, 156
- Masistius (masist'ius). Noble Persian killed at Plataea, 218
- Massagetæ (massagët'ee). A warlike people who defeated Cyrus, 30
- Megabates (mëgäbät'ees). A Persian, one of the royal house, 134
- Megabyzus (mëgäbyd'zus). A noble Persian, 132
- Megacles (meg'äclees). A noble Athenian, 119
- Megara (mëg'ära). Province of Greece between Attica and Corinth, 216
- Megistias (megist'ias). Spartan prophet at Thermopylae, 184
- Melissa (mëlliss'a). Wife of Periander of Corinth, 94
- Memphis (mem'fis). Ancient Cairo, 41
- Messenia (messeen'ia). Province in south-west Peloponnesus, 107
- Midas (meidass). King of Phrygia, 1
- Miletus (mileet'us). Chief town of Ionia, 87
- Milo (meilo). A famous athlete, 69
- Miltiades (milter'ädees). Athenian general at Marathon, 87
- Mithradates (mithradät'ees). Shepherd of Astyages, 17
- Mnesiphilus (mneesiph'ilüs). The wise friend of Themistocles, 196
- Murychides (murich'idees). A Greek sent on a message to the Athenians by Mardonius, 213
- Musæus (musee'us). An ancient poet and seer, 158
- Mycalæ (milk'älee). In Asia Minor, scene of last battle with Persians, 232
- Mysia (miss'ia). Province in Asia Minor, 6
- Naxos. An island of the Ægean, 126
- Neleus (neel'yooss). King of Pylos, father of Nestor, 121
- Neuri (nyooen). A Thracian tribe, 82
- Oceanus (osee'anüs). A great river, supposed to surround the earth, 77
- Cebares (ee'bärees). Groom of Darius, 61
- Eroë (o-e-rö-ee). Stream in Boeotia, 222
- Ceobazus (ceobad'zus). A Persian who made a certain request of Darius, 79
- Olympia (olymp'ia). Town in Elis, seat of Olympic games, 119
- Olympus (olymp'us). Mountain in north Greece, 170
- Onomacritus (onomak'rītus). A prophet, 158
- Oreithya (oreithwei'a). Athenian maiden, wedded to Boreas, 179
- Orestes (orest'ees). Son of Agamemnon, 108
- Orcetes (oreet'ees). A Persian, enemy of Polycrates, 54
- Osiris (oseir'is). An Egyptian god, 46
- Ossa. Mountain in north Greece, south-east of Olympus, 170
- Otanes (ott'änees). A Persian, 57
- Othryades (oth'rīädees). A Spartan, 110
- Pactolus (pacto'lus). A river in Lydia, rich in alluvial gold, 1
- Pagase (pag'asee). Harbour in Thessaly, 180
- Pan. God of universal nature, 152
- Panathenæic Festival. At Athens, to commemorate the union of the Athenian tribes into one people, 128
- Panites (panet'tees). A Messenian, 102
- Parian marble. From the island of Paros, in the Ægean, 131
- Parnes (par'nees). Mountain in Attica, 130

- Parthenius** (parthên'ius). Mountain in Peloponnesus, 151  
**Pausanias** (pausan'ias). Spartan general, 215  
**Peirene** (peirēnee). Fountain in Corinth, 92  
**Pelion** (pee'hion). Mountain in Thessaly, 190  
**Peloponnesus** (peloponneesus). Ancient Morea, 100  
**Peneus** (peeneeus). River in Thessaly, 178  
**Periander** (pēriand'er). Son of Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, 93  
**Pericles** (periclees). Great Athenian statesman, 121  
**Phædyme** (fee'dimee). Daughter of Otanes, 57  
**Phalerum** (fāleer'um). Harbour of Athens, 155  
**Phanes** (fanees). A Greek, who deserted from Amasis, 40  
**Phidippides** (feidip'pidees). A famous Athenian runner, 151  
**Phocis** (fōsis). Province of central Greece, 183  
**Phrygia** (fry'jia). Province in Asia Minor, 1  
**Phrynichus** (frein'nikus). Athenian dramatist, 146  
**Phya** (fei'a). An Athenian woman, 124  
**Pisistratus** (peisistrātus). Tyrant of Athens, 88  
**Platæa** (plātee'a). Town in Bœotia, 153  
**Polycrates** (poli'crātees). Tyrant of Samos, 52  
**Prexaspes** (preexas'pees). A noble Persian, 47  
**Procles** (prō'clees). One of the first kings of Sparta, 103  
**Psammenitus** (sammeener'itus). A king of Egypt, 40  
**Psytalea** (syttālee'a). Small island off Salamis, 202  
**Pythius** (pei'thius). A wealthy Lydian, 164  
**Rhampsinitus** (rampsinef'itus). Ancient king of Egypt, 34  
**Rhenea** (reenee'a). Small island near Delos, 149  
**Sais** (sa-is). City of Egypt, 43  
**Salamis** (sāl'āmis). Island off the coast of Attica, 173  
**Samos**. Island off the Coast of Asia Minor, 228  
**Sandoces** (san'dōkees). A Greek subject of Persia, 180  
**Sauromatæ** (saurōm'ātee). Wild Tartar tribe, 80  
**Scamander** (scāmand'ēr). River of Troy, 166  
**Sciathus** (skei'āthūs). Island off coast of Thessaly, 177  
**Scyllias** (skill'ias). A famous swimmer, 188  
**Scythians** (sith'i'ans). A wild people of Tartar race, 67  
**Semiramis** (semer'rāmis). Ancient queen of Babylon, 74  
**Sepias** (see'pias). A cape in Thessaly, 178  
**Sicinnus** (sikun'nus). A slave of Themistocles, 202  
**Sicyon** (sik'ion). A town of Peloponnesus, 119  
**Sigeum** (seigeem). A cape near Troy, 131  
**Simonides** (seimon'idees). A famous Greek poet, 140  
**Sisannes** (sisam'nees). A Persian judge, 49  
**Smerdis**, brother of Cambyses, 47  
**Smerdis Magus**, the Pretender, 57  
**Solon**, the Athenian law-giver, 3  
**Sosicles** (so'siclees). A Corinthian, 88  
**Sousa** (sū'za). Capital of Persia (Shushan), 50  
**Spargapises** (spargaper'sees). Son of Tomyrus, 32  
**Stagirus** (stagei'rus). Town in northern Greece, 169  
**Strymon** (streimōn). River in Thrace, 169  
**Sunum** (su'nium). Southern point of Attica, 155

## 238 Stories from Greek History

- Syloson (sei'lōsōn). A Samian, who gave his cloak to Darius, 62
- Tænarum (tee'nārum). Southern cape of Peloponnesus, 99
- Tanais (tan-ă-is). River of Thrace, 83
- Tarentum (tarent'um). Greek town of southern Italy, 68
- Tauri. Natives of Tauric Chersonese, the ancient Crimea, 81
- Tearus (te'ārūs). A river of Thrace
- Tegea (tej'ia). A city of Arcadia, 107
- Tellus. An Athenian, 3
- Tenedos (ten'ēdōs). An island off coast of Troy, 146
- Tenos (tee'nos). Island of Ægean, 149
- Tempe (tem'pee). A beautiful valley in northern Thessaly, 176
- Themistocles (thēmist'ōclees). A famous Athenian statesman, 173
- Thermopylæ (thermō'pīlee). A mountain pass in central Greece, 177
- Thespiæ (thes'piee). Town in Boeotia, 184
- Thetis (thet'tis). A sea-goddess, mother of Achilles, 179
- Thrasylbulus (thras'sibyoolus). Tyrant of Miletus, 94
- Thyrea (thi'rēă). A strip of land, south of Argos, 107
- Timagenides (teimāgen'idees). A wealthy Theban, 227
- Timon (tei'mōn). A Delphian, 172
- Tiryns (tei'rins). An ancient city of Argos, 110
- Timolus (t-mo'lus). Mountain of Asia Minor, 140
- Tomyris (tom'mīrīs). Queen of Massagetæ, 30
- Triremes (trei'reems). Ships with three banks of oars, 162
- Troezen (tree'zeen). City of Peloponnesus, 177
- Tyrtæus (tertee'us). A Spartan poet, 107
- Xanthippus (xanthip'pus). Father of Pericles, 121
- Xerxes (xerxees). King of Persia, 157
- Zalmoxis (zalmox'is). A Thracian god, 72
- Zeus (zyoos). God of the sky, 56
- Zopyrus (zo'pīrūs). A brave Persian, 80

